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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preliminary Note

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THESIS
THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH GENTLEWOMAN
AS SEEN IN
THE PASTON LETTERS
by
Ruby Hasseltine Cole
(A. B. Boston University, 1906)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

1933

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preliminary Note

A.	History and Various Editions of the Letters	P. 1
B.	Purpose of This Study	P. 2
C.	The Paston Family	P. 3
I	Condensed History	P. 3
II	Origin. Clement Paston, died 1419	P. 4
III	Growing Importance - Sir William Paston, 1378-1444.	P. 4
IV	Struggle for Fortune John Paston (1) 1420-1446	P. 5
V	Maintenance of Power Sir John (2) 1441-1479 John Paston, Esquire 3, died 1503	P. 8 P. 10
D.	Representative Paston Women	P. 11
I	Agnes, Wife of Sir William, died 1479	P. 11
II	Margaret, Wife of John (1), died 1484	P. 11
III	Margery, Wife of John (3), died 1495	P. 13
E.	The Life of a Fifteenth Century Gentlewoman	P. 13
I	Betrothal and Marriage	P. 13
II	A Medieval Housewife	P. 16
1.	The House	P. 16
2.	Provision of Food	P. 20
3.	Sickness and its Care	P. 22
4.	Clothing	P. 23
5.	Children and Parents	P. 27
6.	Training and Education of Children	P. 28
7.	Books	P. 30
III	The Woman of Affairs	P. 31
1.	Management of Estate	P. 31
2.	Struggle against Lawless Agression	P. 32
IV	The Church Woman	P. 33
1.	Religious Ceremonies	P. 33
2.	Private Chapels and Chaplains	P. 35
3.	Parish Churches	P. 35
4.	The Regular Clergy	P. 36
5.	Pilgrims and Pilgrimages	P. 37
V	The Letter-writer	P. 38
1.	The Letters	P. 38
2.	The Carriers	P. 40
3.	Preserving letters	P. 40
	Summary	P. 41
	Bibliography	P. 43
	Appendix I, Geneological Table	P. 45
	Appendix II, Map of Part of Norfolk	P. 46
	Appendix III, Letters in Original Spelling	P. 47

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preliminary Note

P. 1	I. History and Various Editions of the Letters
P. 2	II. Purpose of This Study
P. 3	III. The Boston Family
P. 4	IV. General History
P. 5	V. Original Clements Papers, dated 1818
P. 6	VI. Opening Paragraph - Sir William
P. 7	VII. Boston, 1818-1820
P. 8	VIII. Correspondence for Boston
P. 9	IX. John Weston (1) 1820-1822
P. 10	X. Maintenance of Power
P. 11	XI. Sir John (2) 1821-1822
P. 12	XII. John Weston, Esquire 2, dated 1822
P. 13	XIII. Representative Boston Women
P. 14	XIV. I. Letter, dated at Sir William, dated 1823
P. 15	XV. II. Letter, dated at John (1), dated 1824
P. 16	XVI. III. Letter, dated at John (2), dated 1825
P. 17	XVII. The Life of a Representative Boston Woman
P. 18	XVIII. I. Personal and Family
P. 19	XIX. II. A General Overview
P. 20	XX. I. The House
P. 21	XXI. II. Provision of Food
P. 22	XXII. III. Education and the House
P. 23	XXIII. IV. Clothing
P. 24	XXIV. V. Children and Parents
P. 25	XXV. VI. Training and Education of Children
P. 26	XXVI. VII. House
P. 27	XXVII. VIII. The Town of Boston
P. 28	XXVIII. IX. Improvement of Boston
P. 29	XXIX. X. Boston as a General Overview
P. 30	XXX. XI. The Boston Women
P. 31	XXXI. XII. Religious Communities
P. 32	XXXII. XIII. Private Lives and Characters
P. 33	XXXIII. XIV. Boston Women
P. 34	XXXIV. XV. The Boston Family
P. 35	XXXV. XVI. Religion and Education
P. 36	XXXVI. XVII. The Boston Women
P. 37	XXXVII. XVIII. The Boston Women
P. 38	XXXVIII. XIX. The Boston Women
P. 39	XXXIX. XX. The Boston Women
P. 40	XXXX. XXI. The Boston Women
P. 41	XXXXI. XXII. The Boston Women
P. 42	XXXXII. XXIII. The Boston Women
P. 43	XXXXIII. XXIV. The Boston Women
P. 44	XXXXIV. XXV. The Boston Women
P. 45	XXXXV. XXVI. The Boston Women
P. 46	XXXXVI. XXVII. The Boston Women
P. 47	XXXXVII. XXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 48	XXXXVIII. XXIX. The Boston Women
P. 49	XXXXIX. XXX. The Boston Women
P. 50	XXXXX. XXXI. The Boston Women
P. 51	XXXXXI. XXXII. The Boston Women
P. 52	XXXXXII. XXXIII. The Boston Women
P. 53	XXXXXIII. XXXIV. The Boston Women
P. 54	XXXXXIV. XXXV. The Boston Women
P. 55	XXXXXV. XXXVI. The Boston Women
P. 56	XXXXXVI. XXXVII. The Boston Women
P. 57	XXXXXVII. XXXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 58	XXXXXVIII. XXXIX. The Boston Women
P. 59	XXXXXIX. XXXX. The Boston Women
P. 60	XXXXXX. XXXXI. The Boston Women
P. 61	XXXXXXI. XXXXII. The Boston Women
P. 62	XXXXXXII. XXXXIII. The Boston Women
P. 63	XXXXXXIII. XXXXIV. The Boston Women
P. 64	XXXXXXIV. XXXXV. The Boston Women
P. 65	XXXXXXV. XXXXVI. The Boston Women
P. 66	XXXXXXVI. XXXXVII. The Boston Women
P. 67	XXXXXXVII. XXXXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 68	XXXXXXVIII. XXXXIX. The Boston Women
P. 69	XXXXXXIX. XXXX. The Boston Women
P. 70	XXXXXXX. XXXXI. The Boston Women
P. 71	XXXXXXXI. XXXXII. The Boston Women
P. 72	XXXXXXXII. XXXXIII. The Boston Women
P. 73	XXXXXXXIII. XXXXIV. The Boston Women
P. 74	XXXXXXXIV. XXXXV. The Boston Women
P. 75	XXXXXXXV. XXXXVI. The Boston Women
P. 76	XXXXXXXVI. XXXXVII. The Boston Women
P. 77	XXXXXXXVII. XXXXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 78	XXXXXXXVIII. XXXXIX. The Boston Women
P. 79	XXXXXXXIX. XXXX. The Boston Women
P. 80	XXXXXXX. XXXXI. The Boston Women
P. 81	XXXXXXXI. XXXXII. The Boston Women
P. 82	XXXXXXXII. XXXXIII. The Boston Women
P. 83	XXXXXXXIII. XXXXIV. The Boston Women
P. 84	XXXXXXXIV. XXXXV. The Boston Women
P. 85	XXXXXXXV. XXXXVI. The Boston Women
P. 86	XXXXXXXVI. XXXXVII. The Boston Women
P. 87	XXXXXXXVII. XXXXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 88	XXXXXXXVIII. XXXXIX. The Boston Women
P. 89	XXXXXXXIX. XXXX. The Boston Women
P. 90	XXXXXXX. XXXXI. The Boston Women
P. 91	XXXXXXXI. XXXXII. The Boston Women
P. 92	XXXXXXXII. XXXXIII. The Boston Women
P. 93	XXXXXXXIII. XXXXIV. The Boston Women
P. 94	XXXXXXXIV. XXXXV. The Boston Women
P. 95	XXXXXXXV. XXXXVI. The Boston Women
P. 96	XXXXXXXVI. XXXXVII. The Boston Women
P. 97	XXXXXXXVII. XXXXVIII. The Boston Women
P. 98	XXXXXXXVIII. XXXXIX. The Boston Women
P. 99	XXXXXXXIX. XXXX. The Boston Women
P. 100	XXXXXXX. XXXXI. The Boston Women

PRELIMINARY NOTE

References to the Letters themselves are to Gairdner (see Bibliography) and are given by letter number, thus "P.L. 336".

All other references are given by author and page. References to Traill are all in volume 2.

Modernized spelling is used unless otherwise indicated. In Appendix III samples of letters in the original spelling are given.

The family of the Countess of Perth preserved their correspondence, written in manuscript and a few printed, which threw valuable light upon their family life, their ambitious struggles to acquire and retain property, and their connections with affairs of national interest.

Some of these letters were first published in 1897 by John Ramsay, an antiquarian of Perth, who, having made many and some thorough studies, had been collecting materials from the last century of the family, which he had deposited in the library of the Countess of Perth. The original of this collection was then presented to King George III. These letters were lost for some time and subsequently rediscovered. John Ramsay, who had been engaged in the collection of the whole of his work, brought out two other volumes, and left a third to be published after his death in 1898. Ramsay's manuscript, in which the spelling was in a hand of great and wonderful beauty.

But the discovery of numerous additional letters, the advance in facilities and methods of historical criticism, led to a complete reworking and re-publication of the letters by Dr. James Gairdner, in 1912-4. Later editions by Gairdner appeared in 1920 and 1921, and the final collation

(1) Greenwood vii

(2) Gairdner, *Intro.* iii

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References to the letters themselves are to Deiringer (see Bibli-

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All other references are given by author and page. References to

Trill are all in volume 1.

Modernized spelling is used unless otherwise indicated. In

Appendix III examples of letters in the original spelling are given.

THE LIFE OF A FIFTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH
GENTLEWOMAN AS SEEN IN THE PASTON LETTERS

A. HISTORY AND VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE LETTERS

No contemporary sources of historical information are more revealing than letters, and for literary productions are more natural, unstudied, and lively. The Paston Letters "form a kind of magic mirror in which we may behold the complex life of the fifteenth century."⁽¹⁾ For three generations the family of the Pastons of Norfolk preserved their correspondence, written by themselves and a few friends, which throw valuable light upon their family life, their ambitious struggles to acquire and retain property, and their connections with affairs of national interest.

Some of these letters were first published in 1787 by John Fenn, an antiquarian of some note, into whose hands they had come through rather devious but well authenticated channels from the last member of the family, William Paston, second Earl of Yarmouth. The original of this selection were then presented to King George III. These letters were lost for some time but subsequently rediscovered. Later Fenn, who had been knighted in recognition of the value of his work, brought out two other volumes, and left a fifth to be published after his death in 1823. Fenn's transcript, in modernized⁽²⁾ spelling, was "a model of care and accuracy."

But the discovery of numerous additional letters, the advance in facilities and methods of historical criticism, led to a complete re-study and re-publication of the letters by Dr. James Gairdner, in 1872-5. Later editions by Gairdner appeared in 1896 and 1901, and the final definitive

(1) Greenwood vii

(2) Gairdner, Introd xiii

THE LIFE OF A FIFTEENTH CENTURY MAN
AS REVEALED BY HIS LETTERS

A. WILSON AND VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE LETTERS

No contemporary sources of historical information are more revealing than letters, and for literary productions are more natural, unadorned, and lively. The letters of a man of a kind of heroic age in which he has beheld the complex life of the fifteenth century. For these generations the family of the persons of North's preserved their correspondence, written by themselves and a few friends, which thus valuable light on their family life, their ambitious struggles to acquire and retain property, and their connections with affairs of national interest.

Some of these letters were first published in 1797 by John Prynne, an antiquarian of some note, into whose hands they had come through a dealer, but well authenticated channels from the last member of the family, William Prynne, second Earl of York. The original of this edition were then presented to King George III. These letters were lost for some time but subsequently rediscovered. Later Prynne, who had been knighted in recognition of the value of his work, brought out two other volumes, and left a fifth to be published after his death in 1825. Prynne's transcripts, in addition to spelling, was a model of care and accuracy.

But the discovery of numerous additional letters, the advice in facilities and methods of historical criticism, led to a complete re-edition and re-publication of the letters by Dr. James Gairdner, in 1897-8. Later editions by Gairdner appeared in 1906 and 1907, and the final definitive

edition in 1904. Gairdner's Introduction is in itself a very valuable study of the letters and their revelation of fifteenth century life.

Selections from the letters as transcribed by Fenn were brought out by Alice Drayton Greenwood in 1920. "The Pastons and Their England" by Henry S. Bennett, a volume in "Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought" appeared in 1922. This presents in "systematised form, the information the correspondence gives us concerning everyday life in fifteenth century England."⁽¹⁾ The letters are also published in two-volume form in Everyman's Library, edited by Mrs. Archer-Hind from Fenn's edition. Précis only are given of the less important letters.

⁽²⁾
The original are now, most of them, in the British Museum, but some are to be seen at Oxford in the Bodleian Library and at Magdalen College. A few still remain (1922) in private hands.

B. PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Historians in general have been quick to use the Paston Letters as a reservoir of information on political, constitutional, and social history. On a woman, however, the letters make a striking impression of the rather unusual importance of women of that day in business as well as private affairs.

It is a fascinating and illuminating study to trace their large contribution to the rapid and steady growth of the prosperity and prestige of the Pastons, and to learn through them of the multifarious duties and interests of the gentlewoman of five centuries ago.

(1) Bennett ix

(2) Bennett, p.264

edition in 1904. Calverton's Introduction is in itself a very valuable study of the letters and their revelation of fifteenth century life.

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given of the less important letters.

The original, and now, most of them, in the British Museum, but some are to be seen at Oxford in the Bodleian Library and at Leighton College. A few still remain (1922) in private hands.

2. SUMMARY OF THIS STUDY

Historians in general have been quick to use the pastor's letters

as a reservoir of information on political, constitutional, and social history. On a woman, however, the letters make a striking impression of the rather unusual importance of women of that day and their business as well as private affairs.

It is a fascinating and illuminating study to trace their large contribution to the rapid and steady growth of the prosperity and prestige of the Pastors, and to learn through them of the ambitious duties and interests of the gentlemen of five centuries ago.

C. THE PASTON FAMILY

I. CONDENSED HISTORY.

The letters reveal the earlier history of a family which rose in a few generations from the condition of "good plain husband" (men) to the rank of Earls. (1) The first yeoman had a son William, who was justice of the Common Pleas. His son John, bred a lawyer, extended his father's acquisitions of property. This man's two eldest sons strangely enough were likewise called John and are in this study distinguished as John (2) and John (3). Both were soldiers and each in his time was Knighted. Next came Sir William Paston, and eminent counsellor-at-law, whose son Clement became a great naval commander under Henry VII, and built a fine family seat at Oxnead. His nephew, Sir William (2), was known for many deeds of munificence, including the founding of the Grammar School at North Walsham, Norfolk. The line descended through Christopher to Sir Edmund and Sir William, Baronets, and then to Sir Robert, who in the reign of Charles II was created Viscount and afterward Earl of Yarmouth, and was prominent in Parliament and in high favor at Court. William, the second Earl, married a natural daughter of Charles II. This alliance overtaxed his means, and having survived all of his male issue, he died in 1732. when his title became extinct and his estate was sold to pay his debts. Such was the rise of an ambitious family ready to take advantage of the conditions of the transition period from medieval to modern times.

It is by the earlier generations of the Pastons that the letters were written, during the reigns of Henry VI (1422-1461), Edward IV (1461-1483), Edward V (1483), Richard III (1483-1485) and Henry VII (1485-1509). (3)
The earliest manuscript was dated 1424, and the latest, 1506.

(1) Gairdner, Introd xix - xxi

(2) P.L. 1

(3) P.L. 953

THE FOSTER FAMILY

I. CONTEMPORARY HISTORY.

The letters reveal the earlier history of a family which rose in a few generations from the condition of "poor plain husband" (man) to the rank

(1)

of lords. The first person had a son William, who was Justice of the

Common Pleas. His son John, bred a lawyer, extended his father's legal

class of property. This man's two eldest sons, who were distinguished as John (2) and John

(3). Both were noblemen and each in his line was knighted. Next came Sir

William Foster, and eminent counsel-at-law, whose son Clement became a

great naval commander under Henry VII, and built a fine family seat at

Canterbury. His nephew, Sir William (4), was known for many deeds of valour, and

including the founding of the Grammar School at Northampton, Northampton.

line descended through Christopher to Sir Edmund and Sir William, barons,

and then to Sir Robert, who in the reign of Charles II was created Viscount

and afterward Earl of York, and was prominent in Parliament and in high

favor at Court. William, the second Earl, married a natural daughter of

Charles II. This alliance overruled his means, and having survived all of

his wife's house, he died in 1732. When his title became extinct and his

estate was sold to pay his debts. Such was the rise of an ambitious family

ready to take advantage of the condition of the transition period from

medieval to modern times.

It is of the earlier generations of the Fosters that the letters

were written, during the reigns of Henry VI (1422-1461), Edward IV (1461-

1483), Richard V (1483-1493), Richard III (1483-1493) and Henry VII (1483-1509).

(5)

The earliest manuscript was dated 1484, and the latest, 1506.

(1) Deceased, before 1484 - xxi

(2) R.L. I

(3) R.L. 102

II. Origin - Clement Paston, died 1419

(1)

Clement Paston of Paston, near the coast of Norfolk, worked at one plough winter and summer, rode back to mill with his corn, and drove his own cart to market. He had several acres of land in Paston, and held bond-land in the manor of Gemyngham. His descendants later repudiated the idea that he was a villein. His wife, Beatrice, was a sister of Geoffrey of Somerton, a serf, who had become a pardoner and "gathered many pence and half-pence". Clement thriftily increased his holdings to about six score acres before he died in 1419.

III. GROWING IMPORTANCE - SIR WILLIAM PASTON - 1378-1444

(2)

His son, William, he set to school, borrowing money to keep him there, and later with the help of his brother-in-law Geoffrey, sent him to court, where he learned the law, and "begat much good, then he was made a sergeant and afterwards a justice, and a right cunning man in law." (3)

William was a student at one of the Inns of Court in London, and rose rapidly, being made a justice of the Common Pleas in 1429. He was appointed steward to the Bishop of Norwich, and was soon the trusted adviser of moneyed families of the district. The law was an especially well-chosen profession for an ambitious man, for the conditions of the society of the time made great demands on lawyers and justices.

Justice Paston lost no chance to improve his position, and set his heart on founding a family in his native place. He extended the family holdings until he was the chief landowner in Paston, and became an esquire. This made it possible for him to marry into a gentleman's family, and he chose for his wife Agnes, the daughter and heiress of Harlingbury Hall in Hertfordshire. By this marriage he acquired several more manors, most of

(1) Bennett, p. 1, and Traill, p. 391

(2) Bennett, pp. 1 and 2

(3) Traill, p. 392.

II. William Paston, died 1418

(1)

William Paston of Paston, near the coast of Norfolk, worked as one plough winter and summer, rode back to mill with his corn, and drove his own cart to market. He had several acres of land in Paston, and held bond-land in the honor of Gwent. His descendants later repurchased the land that he was a villain. His wife, Beatrice, was a sister of Geoffrey of Somerton, a knight, who had become a prisoner and "gathered many lands and half-pence". William finally increased his holdings to about six score acres before he died in 1418.

III. Geoffrey Paston - 1378-1444

(2)

His son, William, he set to school, borrowing money to keep him there, and later with the help of his brother-in-law Geoffrey, sent him to court, where he learned the law, and "became much good, then he was made a sergeant and afterwards a justice, and a right cunning man in law." William was a student at one of the Inns of Court in London and rose rapidly, being made a justice of the Common Pleas in 1423. He was appointed steward to the Bishop of Norwich, and was soon the trusted adviser of moneyed families of the district. The law was an especially well-chosen profession for an ambitious man, for the conditions of the society of the time made great demands on lawyers and justices.

Justice Paston lost no chance to improve his position, and his heart on founding a family in his native place. He extended the family holdings until he was the chief landowner in Paston, and became an expert. This made it possible for him to marry into a gentleman's family, and he chose for his wife Agnes, the daughter and heiress of Harrington Hall in Northamptonshire. By this marriage he acquired several more manors, most of

them nearby, including Gresham, and Oxnead, which later became the favorite family seat. In spite of jealous neighbors, both he, and his wife after his death succeeded in holding these properties, though not without fierce struggles. He became very wealthy for the times, in gold as well as in land. Not only was he too strong to quarrel with; he grew in esteem and favor, and died in 1444 greatly respected and honored. (1)

IV. STRUGGLE FOR FORTUNE - JOHN PASTON (1) 1420-1446

Before the Judge died, he took pains to see his son John so married as to strengthen the family position. John Paston married Margaret, daughter and heiress of John Mauteby, Norfolk, and by so doing acquired the manors of Mauteby, Sparham, and others.

This young man, upon his father's death, found himself confronted with a great struggle to control and keep intact the family possessions, and to uphold the newly gained family position as County Magnates. To do this he had to make use of all the means available to ambitious gentlemen at that period; "by the law, by the influence of patrons, by favorable marriages, and by placing their childrenⁿ in the houses of great landowners, or of the nobility." (2)

Justice William had warned his sons "that whosoever should dwell at Paston should have need to know how to defend himself." (3) John seems to have studied at Trinity Hall and Peterhouse, Cambridge, and spent much time at the Inner Temple. (4)

The attacks on him soon began. The parson pulled up the "doles" (5) for the new roadway across Paston, and the right of the widow, Agnes, to Oxnead was disputed vigorously. (6) Lord Molynes was persuaded to assert claim to Gresham and took possession, backed by Heydon and Tuddenham, tools

(1) P.L. 47

(2) Bennett p.4.

(3) P.L. 46

(4) Bennett p.105

(5) P.L. 46

(6) P.L. 66

their history, including Gresham and Oswald, which later became the favorite family seat. In spite of jealous neighbors, both he and his wife after his death succeeded in holding these properties, though not without fierce struggles. He became very wealthy for the times, in gold as well as in land. Not only was he too strong to quarrel with his great in-laws and
(1) later, and died in 1444 greatly respected and honored.

IV. STEPHEN'S SON - JOHN PASTON (1) 1444-1448

Before the judge died, he took pains to see his son John so married as to strengthen the family position. John Paston married Margaret, daughter and heiress of John Boleyn, Norfolk, and by so doing acquired the honors of Boleyn, Spenser, and others.

This young man, upon his father's death, found himself confronted with a great struggle to control and keep intact the family possessions, and to uphold the newly gained family position as County Boleyn. To do this he had to make use of all the means available to ambitious gentlemen of that period; "by the law, by the influence of patron, by favorable marriages, and by placing their children in the houses of great landowners,
(2) or of the nobility."

Justice William had warned his sons "that whoever should dwell at Paston should have need to know how to defend himself." John seems to have studied at Trinity Hall and Peterhouse, Cambridge, and spent much time
(4) at the Inner Temple.

The attack on his soon began. The person called up the "John" (5) for the new robbery across Paston, and the right of the widow, Agnes, to Oswald was disputed vigorously. Lord Boleyn was persuaded to grant claim to Gresham and took possession, backed by Boleyn and Tristram, both

of the Duke of Suffolk. John Paston got William Wayneflete, Bishop of Winchester, to act as his friend. Molyne's retainers held Gresham as if under siege.⁽¹⁾ Paston traveled to Salisbury and elsewhere to speak with Molyne. While he was absent in London, Margaret, his wife, established at Gresham, found that Molyne had sent an armed force a thousand strong to turn out the Pastons.⁽²⁾ Protected by but twelve persons, she was easily driven out and the house destroyed,⁽³⁾ as John complained in his petition to the King. After various delays John gained possession of Gresham and determined to bring action against Lord Molyne. But the strength of the latter's influence in court, Paston was warned, would make it impossible to get a jury to bring verdict against him.⁽³⁾ However, Molyne later seems to have withdrawn his claim and stood ready to make good the damage done at Gresham.

This episode well illustrates the characteristic difficulties to be met by landholders in the middle of the fifteenth century. The custom of "livery and maintenance" gave a landholder power to equip as large a retinue as he could afford, not only of his own tenants, but also of hired ruffians. The unlawful acts of such bands often amounted to private war. Such lawless violence was often combined with legal chicanery and corruption,⁽⁴⁾ and lawyers and jurymen likewise were in the pay of the lawbreakers. "We find the Duke of Norfolk appointing his men to be justices and sheriffs, empanelling his tenants on juries, exercising notorious and horrible intimidation over the courts of law, forcibly rescuing a murderer, buying up wrongful disseisins, besieging Caister Castle with three thousand men on a private quarrel, sending 'his menial servants' to Parliament. No wonder that to Paston in Norfolk the secret of success in life seemed to lie in

(1) P.L. 67.

(2) P.L. 77.

(3) P.L. 155 and 164.

(4) Trevelyan, p. 259.

of the Duke of Norfolk. John Paston got William Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, to act as his friend. Wykeham's relations with Paston as if under aegis. (1) Paston traveled to Salisbury and elsewhere to speak with Wykeham. While he was absent in London, Margaret, his wife, established at Wykeham, found that Wykeham had sent an armed force a thousand strong to turn out the Pastons. (2) Protected by four twelve persons, she was easily driven out and the house destroyed, as John complained in his petition to the King. After various delays John gained possession of Wykeham and determined to bring action against John Wykeham. But the strength of the latter's influence, in court, Paston was turned, would make it impossible to get a jury to bring verdict against him. (3) However, Wykeham later seems to have withdrawn his claim and stood ready to make good the damage done at Wykeham.

This episode well illustrates the characteristic difficulties to be met by landholders in the middle of the fifteenth century. The custom of "livery and maintenance" gave a landholder power to equip as large a retinue as he could afford, not only of his own tenants, but also of hired retainers. The unlawful acts of such bands often amounted to private wars. Such lawless violence was often combined with legal subterfuge and corruption, and lawyers and jurymen likewise were in the pay of the landholders. (4) Thus the Duke of Norfolk appointing his men to be justices and sheriffs, organizing his tenants on juries, exercising notorious and horrible jurisdiction over the courts of law, forcibly rescuing a murderer, paying up wrongful disseisin, besieging Oyster Castle with three thousand men on a private quarrel, sending his rental servants to parliament. No wonder that to Paston in Norfolk the secret of success in life seemed to lie in

securing such a great lord's favor; 'get you lordship, for thereon hang all the law and the prophers.' When the Star Chamber made it its object 'to (1)
bridle such stout noblemen' it came none too soon for the general welfare."

John Paston's prestige was heightened by his victory over Molynes, (2)
and he was advised to make an effort to be returned to Parliament. He led
opposition to the terrorism of a band of ruffians, and was set upon in
(3)
Norwich Cathedral by the gang. Paston served the County well, probably
partly because he realized that the interests of the County and his own
(4)
were identical.

Soon his zeal and ability attracted just such a man as his ambi-
tions needed. Sir John Fastolf, perhaps a distant kinsman, had come into
prominence as a soldier both in Ireland and in France during the later
(5)
campaigns of the Hundred Years War. On retiring to England he added to
his fortunes by shipping barley and malt to the continent. After settling
in Norfolk, he found himself turning to John Paston for advice and knowledge
of local affairs. John made himself indispensable to Fastolf, who was
(6)
erecting a stately castle at Caister. As Fastolf's death drew near he
(7)
ordered a clause inserted in his will which made John Paston his heir.

Fastolf's death made John Paston one of the wealthiest men in
Norfolk. But he had also become an object of envy. At once he was in-
volved in legal difficulties in taking over the property. Many claimants,
including the Duke of Exeter and the Duke of Norfolk, tried to assert their
rights to portions of Fastolf's property. At last, however, the estate was
given to be administered by the two executors, Paston and Sir Thomas Howes.
Paston's new importance led to his election as Knight of the Shire and
(8)
again when Edward IV became King he was returned to Parliament.

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|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------|
| (1) Traill, 312 and 313 | (4) Bennett, p.9. | (7) P.L. 333. |
| (2) P.L. 113 | (5) Everyman, p.141 | (8) P.L. 335 |
| (3) P.L. 179 | and 142 | and 397 |
| | (6) P.L. 185, 186 | |

To hold his newly acquired possessions was going to mean a long, hard struggle. The Duke of Norfolk seized Caister Castle, but through the King's favor it was restored to Paston.

A great patron was still the family's need. Paston got his eldest son John (2) knighted. For Sir John, as he now became, a place in the King's household was found, in the hope that he might make friends of young noblemen there. The Duke of Norfolk had died, and was succeeded by his son, in whose household John (1) obtained a place for his second son, John (3) who signed himself "John Paston, Esq."

But opposition could not be avoided; his co-executors in Fastolf's will turned against him and tried to get possession of some of the manors. Paston's enemies were strong, and the "struggle went on, now in the Manor courts, now at Norwich, and now in the King's Courts at Westminster." (1) Twice Paston was thrown into the Fleet Prison. (2) Yet his presence was almost equally essential in the Manor courts of Norfolk and in the Church Courts at London. For long periods of time his affairs had to be left to the care of his wife and sons.

A more formidable enemy, the Duke of Suffolk, lay claim to the Manor of Drayton, while Yelverton attempted to wrest away the manor of Cotton. One high-handed action succeeded another, and at last the Duke's men attacked the Pastons' house at Hellesdon, took it, and wrecked and pillaged it. (3) No wonder that John Paston was worn out with his exertions, and died in 1466, in his forty-sixth year. He was buried with great magnificence in Bromholm Abbey in Norfolk. (4)

V. MAINTENANCE OF POWER - SIR JOHN (2) 1441-1479

"Sir John (2) was a man of very different calibre from his father" (5)

(1) Bennett, p.14

(2) P.L. 421, 491-4

(3) P.L. 534

(4) P.L. 549

(5) Bennett. p.8

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A more formidable enemy, the Duke of Suffolk, lay claim to the Manor of Brayton, while Yelverton attempted to wrest away the Manor of Goston. One high-handed action succeeded another, and at last the Duke's men attacked the Pastons' house at Halesdon, took it, and wrecked and pillaged it. (2) No wonder that John Paston was worn out with his exertions, and died in 1468, in his forty-sixth year. He was buried with great magnificence in Bromholm Abbey in Norfolk.

V. MAINTENANCE OF POWER - SIR JOHN (2) 1441-1473

(3) "Sir John (2) was a man of very different calibre from his father"

(1) Bennett, p. 14	(4) F. J. G. 249
(2) F. J. G. 401-4	(5) Bennett, p. 2
(3) F. J. G. 24	

He was known to his friends "as the best chooser of a gentlewoman," and was much more of a courtier than a lawyer. Similar attacks on his property were made, and his various manors threatened. His mother wisely advised him (1) "not to be too hasty to be married till you were more sure of your livelode" (lands and rent from which an income was derived). As a matter of fact, though he was involved in various love-affairs, he never did marry.

Fifteen months after John (1) Paston's death, the lengthy law suit over Fastolf's property came to an end. Sir John and Bishop Wayneflete, now acting as sole executors, agreed that Sir John should surrender the title deeds of all property except Caister. (2) But the usual sad result of such litigation obtained: by the "disputes the property..... has been much (3) wasted."

Though Sir John had had to give up much, he still had Caister, the magnificent castle. But he was not left in peaceful possession long. The co-executors of Fastolf's will, who had been such bitter enemies of John (1) Paston, declared the will false, and took steps for the sale of Caister to the Duke of Norfolk. Sir John began to collect a garrison at Caister and (4) sought aid of his friends at court. (5) He was summoned to Westminster and left his brother John Paston, Esquire, (3) in command. Norfolk besieged the (6) place with 3000 men. John (3) and his scanty garrison put up a brave resistance. John (2) in London failed to realize the urgency of the situation, and the garrison had to yield, but was allowed to depart unharmed, without its weapons. Caister was gone again.

Sir John (2) seems to have been careless in business affairs, and at this time the family were often in great distress for lack of money. Margaret was constantly being urged by her son to raise money by loans or

(1) P.L. 601

(2) Bennett p.18

(3) P.L. 645

(4) P.L. 589, 591

(5) P.L. 599

(6) P.L. 616

is the answer to his friends "at the best choice of a gentleman," and as
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(1)	P.L. 601	(1)	P.L. 601
(2)	P.L. 601	(2)	P.L. 601
(3)	P.L. 601	(3)	P.L. 601

sales of lands and is continually unable to get more than a few pounds.

John (3) was equally hard pressed. No wonder they remonstrated with Sir John for his pursuit of pleasure in London, when he wrote about the delights of a tournament.

Then Sir John (2) set himself in earnest to win back what he should never have lost. He sold some land, sold his woods at Sporle, and pawned some of the family plate. His mother was forced to declare that if he sold any more lands she would subtract double their value from what he might inherit from her. So it went on month after month, and year after year.

"Yet weak and careless as he was in most matters, John was always deeply anxious to win back Caister. All appeals to the Duke were fruitless. At length the Duke suddenly died. Sir John (2) for once acted wisely and promptly, and sent a messenger to Caister to assert his claims. The Duchess of Norfolk was less hostile than her husband.

"At length, in May, 1476, the matter was brought before the King's Council, and all present held his claim to be good!"

After seven long years he could write to his mother "Blessed be God, I have Caister at my will."

Sir John had difficulties over Hellesdon and Drayton (with the Duke of Suffolk,) which were still unsettled when he died in 1479.

JOHN PASTON, ESQUIRE (3) (died in 1503)

John (3) like Sir John (2) was a soldier and saw service in France. Under his management, the chaotic affairs of the family were gradually straightened out. He maintained his own claims successfully against

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|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| (1) P.L. 573 | (4) P.L. 633 | (7) Bennett, p.26 |
| (2) P.L. 571 | (5) P.L.644 & 649 | (8) P.L. 779 |
| (3) P.L. 634 | (6) P.L. 694 | |

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(1)	P.L. 373	(4)	P.L. 333	(7)	Bonnell, p. 66
(2)	P.L. 371	(5)	P.L. 331	(8)	P.L. 373
(3)	P.L. 369	(6)	P.L. 330		

the encroachments of his uncle, William Berney. "John was too able and too trustworthy a man to be ignored in the stirring days when Henry VII had newly gained the throne, and we may fitly take our leave of this chequered family on the day he became Sherrif of Norfolk, 'right well beloved councillor of the Earl of Oxford,'⁽¹⁾ and destined to be later knighted for distinguished service at the battle of Stoke."⁽²⁾

D. REPRESENTATIVE PASTON WOMEN

I. AGNES PASTON, WIFE OF SIR WILLIAM, died in 1479.

Justice William shrewdly allied himself with the daughter and co-heiress of a landed gentleman, Agnes Berry. Not only did marriage with her bring him valuable property, and consolidate his position as a county gentleman,,but also gave him a true partner in his ambitious, shrewd, cool, and determined wife. She was skilled in legal terms, competent in estate management,⁽³⁾ and interested in current affairs of the nation.⁽⁴⁾ She was devoted to the interests of her children.⁽⁵⁾ Yet she was not above following the customs of the age in treating her daughter Elizabeth cruelly.⁽⁶⁾ Doubtless her tongue could be bitter and her hand heavy. But,dour as she was, and vigorous in upholding her own rights against infringement of them even by her son, she could end a letter to him in what was for the time, a considerable expression of affection.⁽⁷⁾

II. MARGARET PASTON, WIFE OF JOHN PASTON(1), married before 1440, died 1484.

Margaret Paston, daughter and heiress of John Mauteby, a neighboring squire, was the wife selected for John Paston by his shrewd father and mother. Brought together with a frankly business purpose, the two young people had little choice in the matter. Yet,as Agnes writes her husband, "She made him gentle cheer in gentle wise," and the marriage certainly must have been, as the constant interchange of letter shows, reasonably happy

(1) P.L. 887, 892

(2) P.L. Introd.
ccclvii

(3) P.L. 161-2

(4) P.L. 46

(5) P.L. 183

(6) P.L. 71

(7) P.L. 312

the encouragement of his uncle, William Garvey. "John was too old and too infirmly a man to be ignored in the stirring days when Henry VII had nearly gained the throne, and he may fairly take our leave of him charged with the duty he became Sheriff of Hereford, 'right well beloved councillor of the Earl of Hereford,' and destined to be later knighted for distinguished service at the battle of Tewkesbury."

II. MARGARET PASTON, WIFE OF JOHN PASTON (1), married before 1440, died 1450.

Margaret Paston, daughter and heiress of John Paston, a neighboring squire, was the wife selected for John Paston by his friend Latham and mother. Brought together with a frankly business purpose, the two young people had little choice in the matter. Yet, as Agnes writes her husband, "She made him gentle cheer in gentle wise," and the marriage certainly must have been, as the constant interchange of letter came, reasonably happy. Margaret could be bitter and her hand heavy. But, long as she was, and vigorous in upholding her own rights against infringement of them even by her son, she could send a letter to him in which was for the child, a considerable expression of affection.

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(1) P. L. 107, 802
(2) P. L. 108
(3) P. L. 109
(4) P. L. 110
(5) P. L. 111
(6) P. L. 112
(7) P. L. 113

and successful. Much sincere affection breathes through the stilted phrases of both husband and wife.

"My heart is no great ease, nor nought shall be, until I weet that
(1)
ye be very whole," wrote Margaret on hearing of his illness.

John, writing to "mine own dear sovereign lady" a year or so before his death, ends his letter playfully with verses, apologising for having
(2)
"picked your male (trunk) and taken out pieces five."

Margaret brought her husband the rich lands of the manor of Mauteby. For twenty-six years she was his devoted helpmate, always aiding and upholding him in his constant pursuit of prosperity. At first after his marriage, it was his mother who wrote him on estate business. But soon Margaret herself was the correspondent. By 1448 she was managing all his home affairs for him, reporting on disputed rents, selling barley, dealing
(3)
with refractory tenants, and reporting gossip about the King's Ministers.

From then on until his death she acted his confident, chief estate agent, and trusted counsellor, with tireless devotion. Often she bore the brunt of the discomfort caused by his attempts to acquire and hold land. When letters could not determine business, then she went to visit him in
(4)
London. When her husband died she devoted herself to the welfare of her sons.

Through all the years when Sir John (2) was endeavoring to secure Caister, she continued to carry on her multifarious duties with vigor and decision. How varied and exacting her responsibilities were will appear in the course of this study, for the great majority of women's letters in the collection were written by Margaret.

(1) P.L. 36.

(2) P.L. 528.

(3) P.L. 56.

(4) P.L. 528.

III. MARGERY PASTON, WIFE OF JOHN (3), married in 1477 and died in 1495.

Sir John (2), Knight, although he was decidedly susceptible to feminine charms, and was betrothed to Mistress Anne Haute for a long time, never married.

His brother, John (3) Esquire, was most assiduous in his quest for a suitable marriage; that is, of course, one with pecuniary advantages.⁽¹⁾ The letters bear record of venture after venture of his often with his brother, Sir John, as negotiator. But at last he discovered that love as well as money might go to the making of marriage. He heard through friends of Margery Brews, daughter of Sir Thomas and Dame Elizabeth Brews. The story of their courtship will be given later. They were married in less than a year. Margery, before many years had passed, was writing to her husband with a charming mixture of affection and prudence,⁽²⁾ reporting to him the depredations of his enemies on his manors, and offering sage counsel in his affairs. Evidently she was worthily following the tradition of the Paston wives as partners in their husbands' advancement.

E. THE LIFE OF A FIFTEENTH CENTURY GENTLEWOMAN

For the men of the period life was exciting and strenuous, full of challenge. The Paston Letters reveal that it was scarcely less so for the women of the time. This study aims to present some of the more interesting phases in the every day life of a fifteenth century gentlewoman.

I. BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE

I. BETROTHAL

As must already have appeared evident, among people who set such store by property as did the Pastons, marriage was sure to be very much of a business transaction. The modern reader grows heartily weary of the endless insistence on money and property in the discussion of marriage matters.

(1) P.L. 573, 637, 739, 747, 749, &c

(2) P.L. 865, 866, 881, 888, 907.

III. MARGERY BREWSTER, THE BRIDE (2), married in 1877 and died in 1880.
Sir John (2), knight, although he was decidedly susceptible to
female charms, and was betrothed to Elizabeth Anne Stuart for a long time,
never married.

His brother, John (2) Esquire, was most anxious in his quest
for a suitable marriage; that is, of course, one with pecuniary advantages.
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than a year. Margery, before many years had passed, was writing to her
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husband with a charming mixture of affection and persistence, reporting to

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THE LIFE OF A FIFTEENTH CENTURY GENTLEMAN

For the men of the period life was exciting and strenuous, full
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ing phases in the every day life of a fifteenth century gentlewoman.

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1. MARRIAGE

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business transaction. The modern reader grows heartily weary of the endless
insistence on money and property in the discussion of marriage matters.

For the ten years between 1449 and 1459 "There are continuous references to the negotiations for the hand of John (1) Paston's sister Elizabeth." (1) One suitor after another presents himself or is sought by the family. According to the girl's mother, Elizabeth was in one case "never so willing to none as she is to him"; "if it be so that his land stand clear." (2) That, in the eyes of the family, was the one essential. But there is another letter of the same date (3) written by Elizabeth Clere, the girl's cousin, which comes nearer the truth. It tells how the hard determined mother, Agnes Paston, kept Elizabeth shut up so that she could speak to no man nor even to the servants. "She was never in so great sorrow as she is nowadays," and no wonder, for "she hath since Easter the most part been beaten once in the week or twice, and sometimes twice in a day, and her head broken in two or three places." Happily this wooer was unsuccessful. So were several others, until, as Margaret writes her husband, "it seemeth by my mother's language (4) that she would never so fain be delivered of her as she will now." At length, after her brother William had impatiently written, "At the reverence (5) of God, draw to some conclusion; it is time," their persistence bore fruit. Elizabeth was married to Robert Poynings. Her first letter to her mother after her marriage is rather enigmatic: "As for my master, my best-beloved that you call, and I must needs call him so now, for I find no other cause, and as I trust to Jesu, none shall; for he is full kind to me, (6) and is as busy as he can be to make me sure of my jointure."

The importance of betrothal as legally binding may be seen in Sir John's engagement to Anne Haute. Except in the beginning, the affair seems to have been marked by little love on either side, and yet it was necessary for the friends of both to use their influence to end the connection. At last, by a costly appeal to the Church, the matter was terminated.

(1) Bennett, p. 29.

(2) P. L. 70.

(3) P.L. 71.

(4) P. L. 185.

(5) P.L. 216.

(6) P.L. 322.

For the ten years between 1843 and 1853 "There are continuous

references to the negotiations for the hand of John (1) Pearson's sister

(1) Elizabeth." One author after another presents himself or is sought by the

family. According to the girl's mother, Elizabeth was in one case "never so

(2) willing to come as she is to him"; "it is to him that she is bound."

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Barton, kept Elizabeth shut up so long and could speak to no man nor even to

the servants. "She was never in so great sorrow as she is nowdays," and no

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The importance of betrothal as legally binding may be seen in

Mr. John's engagement to Anne Watts. Except in the beginning, the effort

seems to have been marked by little love on either side, and yet it was

necessary for the friends of both to use their influence to end the con-

nection. At last, by a costly appeal to the Church, the matter was finally

settled.

(7) W. L. 180.

(8) W. L. 181.

(9) W. L. 182.

(10) W. L. 183.

(11) W. L. 184.

(12) W. L. 185.

The marriage of John Paston, the youngest, was a happier alliance. As has been shown, he actually found himself in love at last when he met Margery Brews. Elizabeth, Margery's mother, was on his side from the first. Early in February she wrote "Friday is Saint Valentine's Day, and every bird chooseth him a mate," and invited him to come Thursday and remain until Monday so as to discuss business details with her husband. (1) Although John had promised not to speak to Margery until matters were settled, evidently there was some interchange of "fair speechless messages," and after he had departed she wrote to him, calling him "my right well-beloved Valentine," (2) and was "full sorry" that her father made any financial difficulties. Not quite satisfied, apparently, with his reply, she soon wrote again in a most moving appeal: "Wherefore if ye could be content with that good and my poor person, I would be the merriest maiden on ground; and if ye think not yourself satisfied good, true, and loving Valentine, that ye take no such labor upon you as to come more for that matter, but let it pass, and never (3) be spoken of as I may be your true lover and bedde woman during my life.

But John was thoroughly in earnest. He met all objections of her family and his with zeal and adroitness, and though there were many difficulties, they were all surmounted, and he won his bride, probably late in August. That the match was a happy one their later letters make quite clear.

One instance of marrying for love alone freshens the atmosphere of bargaining that hangs over the medieval marriage as shown in the letters. Margery, the youngest daughter of Margaret, was destined by her mother and brothers for an advantageous match. "Suddenly Sir John (2) was startled by news that she had pledged herself to Richard Calle, his chief bailiff!" (4) His surprise and anger were shared by his brother, John (3), who wrote

(1) P.L. 782
(2) P.L. 783

(3) P.L. 784
(4) Bennett p.42

The marriage of John Barton, the youngest, was a happy alliance.
As has been shown, he actually found himself in love at least when he met
Margery Brews. Elizabeth, Margery's mother, was on his side from the first.
Early in February she wrote "Friday is Saint Valentine's Day, and every bird
chooses him a mate," and invited him to come Thursday and remain until
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The instance of marrying for love alone illustrates the atmosphere
of celebrating that change over the medieval marriage as shown in the letters.
Margery, the youngest daughter of Margaret, was desired by her mother and
brother for an advantageous match. "Substantially Sir John (2) was startled by
her a last she had pledged herself to Richard Calle, his chief bellhop."
His surprise and anger were shared by his brother, John (3), who wrote

(1) 15. 153
(2) 15. 153
(3) 15. 153

"he, Calle, should never have my good will for to make my sister sell candle
 (1)
 and mustard in Framlingham." A perfect storm of rage broke over poor Margery's
 head. Her brothers and her mother were violently angry, and her friends
 hostile. There is a letter of tender and sorrowful love from Richard Calle
 (2)
 to Margery, beseeching her to announce their betrothal openly. The fact
 that the letter remains in the correspondence, however, is a pretty good
 proof that Margaret never received the pathetic appeal, or she would have
 burned it as her lover begged her. Yet their devotion held firm through
 opposition and separation. One favorable circumstance was the fact that they
 were really betrothed, which was then held absolutely binding. But when
 Margery made this plain, her troubles were not yet over. The family laid the
 matter before the Bishop of Norwich, in an effort to have the betrothal
 annulled. He sent for ~~Both~~ Calle and Margery and examined them separately.
 He put before Margery all the drawbacks, "what rebuke, shame, and loss should
 be to her if she were not guided," by her friends, and then inquired care-
 fully just "the words she had used to him, whether it made matrimony or not."
 Margery "said boldly that she would make it surer ere she went thence, for
 she said she thought in her conscience she was bound whatsoever the words
 (3)
 were." Calle's testimony confirmed what she had said, and the Bishop
 reserved his judgment until the week after Michaelmas. Her mother sent orders
 by her chaplain, James Gloys, who had been hostile to Margery all along, that
 the girl could not return under her roof. So Margery had to go to a lodging
 in Norwich which the Bishop found for her. The Bishop could not but decide
 that the betrothal really existed. Margery and Calle must have been married
 in a few months. Calle's stewardship of the Paston lands had been honorable
 and efficient, and he remained in the service of the family, but seems to
 have never been recognized as one of its members.

(1) P.L. 607

(2) P.L. 609

(3) P.L. 617

"no, Gail, should never have my good will let to make my sister well again
(1) and married in Birmingham." A perfect storm of rage broke over poor Margery's

head. Her brothers and her mother were violently angry, and her friends
hostile. There is a letter of tender and sorrowful love from Richard Gail
(2) to Margery, beseeching her to announce their betrothal openly. The first

that the letter remains in the correspondence, however, is a pretty good
proof that Margery never received the pathetic appeal, for she would have
burned it as her lover begged her. Yet their devotion held them through
opposition and separation. One favorable circumstance was the fact that they
were really betrothed, which was then held absolutely binding. But when
Margery made this plain, her friends were not yet over. The family laid the

matter before the Bishop of Norwich, in an effort to have the betrothal
annulled. He sent for both Gail and Margery and examined them separately.
He put before Margery all the drawbacks, "what repulse, shame, and loss should
be to her if she were not guided," by her friends, and then inquired care-
fully just "the words she had used to him, whether it was matrimony or not."
Margery "said boldly that she would make it true and she went thence, for
she said she thought in her conscience she was bound whatever the words
(3)

were." Gail's testimony confirmed what she had said, and the Bishop
reverted his judgment until the week after Michaelmas. Her mother sent orders
by her chaplain, James Gloye, who had been hostile to Margery all along, that
the girl could not return under her roof. So Margery had to go to a lodging
in Norwich which the Bishop found for her. The Bishop could not but decide
that the betrothal really existed. Margery and Gail must have been married
in a few months. Gail's stewardship of the Paston lands had been honorable
and efficient, and he remained in the service of the family, but seems to
have never been recognized as one of its members.

(1)
(2)
(3)

MARRIAGE

Prevalent as were marriages of convenience, they seem often to have turned out as happily as though they had had their start in romantic love. And although "wife beating was then a recognized right of man, and was practised without shame by high and low,"⁽¹⁾ the Paston women had nothing of that sort to bear. The marriage of John⁽¹⁾ and Margaret of Mauteby was a carefully planned step in the "climbing" of the Paston family.⁽²⁾ But the young couple soon accommodated themselves to each other, and their letters show unmistakably the strong affection that subsisted between them all their lives. Breaking through the conventionally formal phrases of medieval letter-writing, Margaret's love for her husband of three years shows itself: "...Thanking God of your amending of the great disease that you have had.By my troth I had never so heavy a season as I had from the time that I knew of your sickness till I knew of your amending, and yet my heart is in no great ease, nor shall be, till I know that ye be really well.....If I had my will I should have seen you ere this time..... I pray you if your sore be whole, and so that you may endure to ride.....that you will ask leave and come home.....for I hope you should be kept as tenderly here as ye be at London..... I shall send you another letter as hastily as I may. Almighty God have you in his keeping, and send you health."⁽³⁾

John's affection is also evident. He calls her "my own dear sovereign lady," and protests on hearing of her illness: "John Hobbs tells me that you are sickly, which melikes not to hear. Praying heartily that you take what may do you ease and spare not; and in anywise, take no thought nor too much labor for these matters (of business enclosed) nor set it not so to your heart that ye fare the worse for it."⁽⁴⁾

(1) Trevelyan, p. 260

(2) Bennett, p. 59

(3) P.L. 36

(4) P.L. 514

Providence as were witnesses of convenience, they were often to have
turned out as happily as though they had had their share in romantic love.
And although wife hearing was then a recognized right of man, and was practiced
(1) without shame by high and low, the Boston woman had nothing of that sort to
best. The marriage of John (1) and Margaret of Maudslayi was a carefully planned
(2) step in the "collaring" of the Boston family. But the young couple soon
demonstrated themselves to each other, and their letters show unmistakably the
strong affection that subsisted between them all their lives. Breaking
through the conventionally formal phrases of medieval letter-writing, Margaret's
love for her husband of three years shows itself: "...Thanking God of your
standing of the great disease that you have had. By my faith I had never
so heavy a season as I had from the time that I knew of your sickness till I
knew of your standing, and yet my heart is in no great ease, nor shall be,
till I know that ye be really well. If I had my will I should have seen
you ere this time. I pray you if your sore be whole, and so that you may
venture to ride. that you will ask leave and come home. for I hope you
should be kept as tenderly here as ye be at London. I shall send you
another letter as hastily as I may. Alas! God have you in his keeping,
(3) and send you health."

John's affection is also evident. He calls her "my own dear
sovereign lady," and protests on hearing of her illness: "John Hobbs tells
me that you are sickly, which makes me not to hear. Praying heartily that
you take that day do you ease and spare not; and in any case, take no thought
nor too much labor for these matters (of business enclosed) nor eat it not
(4) as to your heart that ye take the worse for it."

(1) Trevelyan, p. 280
(2) Bennett, p. 25
(3) F. L. 28
(4) F. L. 214

Letters already referred to show the fresh and simple lovingness of Margery for John (3). One written a few years after her marriage begins formally "Right reverent and worshipfull sir," and concludes "By your poor servant and bedewoman," but there is a postscript, "Sir, I pray you, if ye tarry long at London, that it will please (you) to send for me, for I think (1) (it) long since I lay in your arms."

II. A MEDIEVAL HOUSEWIFE

1. THE HOUSE

To picture the environment and home conditions of the Pastons will do much to help in an understanding of how they lived their lives. Fortunately the documents include inventories, attached to wills, which aid in reconstructing our ideas of fifteenth century homes and their furnishings.

The Pastons lived at various times in their different manor houses. Surviving houses of the period have many common characteristics. The building might be of plaster and timber, of stone, or of brick, newly re-introduced into England, the art of making them having been forgotten since Roman days (2) in England. This new building material made larger houses practicable, and hastened the addition of the comfort of chimneys to middle-class homes. In Norfolk and Suffolk especially there are still fine examples of brick (3) mansions of the time of Henry VII.

The chief apartment in such a house would be the hall, with the dais for the head table, and the minstrel's gallery, with arms and armor on the wall, and antlers to serve as hat-racks. A fine example of such a room is to be seen at Haddon Hall in Derbyshire. The hall was still the gathering place of the family, but in larger, newer houses had ceased to be the master's dining room or the retainers' sleeping quarters. The master and family now

(1) P.L. 865

(2) Traill, p. 386 & 7

(3) Traill, p. 569

patterns already referred to show the first and single drawings of
 Margery for John (3). The artist a few years after her marriage begins
 formally "light reverent and worshipful air," and concludes "by your poor
 servant and bedchamber," and there is a postscript, "Sir, I pray you, if ye
 have long at London, that it will please (you) to send for me, for I think
 (1)
 (12) long since I lay in your arms."

II. A MEDIEVAL HOUSE

1. THE HOUSE

To picture the environment and home conditions of the Pastors
 will do much to help in an understanding of how they lived their lives.
 Fortunately the documents include inventories, attached to wills, which aid
 in reconstructing our ideas of fifteenth century homes and their furnishings.
 The Pastors lived at various times in their different career houses.
 Surviving houses of the period have many common characteristics. The building
 might be of plaster and timber, or of brick, nearly re-introduced
 into England, the art of making them having been forgotten since Roman days
 in England. (3) This new building material made larger houses practicable,
 and hastened the addition of the comfort of chimneys to middle-class homes.
 In Norfolk and Suffolk especially there are still fine examples of brick
 mansions of the time of Henry VII.
 The chief apartment in such a house would be the hall, with the
 door for the main table, and the minister's gallery, with stairs and access on
 the wall, and another to serve as latrines. A fine example of such a room
 is to be seen at Eadon Hall in Derbyshire. The hall was still the gathering
 place of the family, but in larger newer houses had ceased to be the master's
 dining room or the retainers' sleeping quarters. The master and family now

had the solar for their more private use, as well as the winter parlor, and sleeping chambers were much more numerous. Margaret wrote her husband:

"I have taken the measure of the drawte chamber (withdrawing chamber, or solar) there as ye would your coffers (chests) and your cowntewery (1) (counter or writing desk?) should be set for the while."

There would be a large wall fireplace in the hall, and possibly one of the new bay windows, soon to become such a feature of Tudor dwellings, for glass was coming to be more common. Windows were highly prized and were so constructed as to be movable. When the Parson of Oxnead left the rectory (2) because of a quarrel, he took the windows and doors of "the house with him." A tenant refused "to stop (glaze) the lights," because the place did not (3) belong to him.

Walls in the better houses were usually hung with tapestries, often from Arras. Sir John Fastolf's will enumerates an enormous variety of all (4) sorts of elaborate hangings, which by their vivid hues must have lent brilliancy of color to the otherwise rather dim rooms.

Furniture was still somewhat scanty and crude. Chests are frequently mentioned, as containing money, plate, clothes, books, or other (5) treasures. The tables were probably of the trestle variety, easily movable. There would be a few massive chairs, but benches or stools more (6) commonly.

There is a bewildering number of chambers mentioned in the (7) inventory accompanying Sir John Fastolf's will, showing how great a number of servants, retainers, and dependents such a house provided for. Other apartments listed include the cellar, the buttry, the brew house, and the kitchen.

(1) P.L. 185

(2) P.L. 819

(3) P.L. 149

(4) P.L. 336

(5) P.L. 365, 566, 670, 954

(6) P.L. 988

had the solar for their more private use, as well as the winter garden, and
dining chamber were much more numerous. Margaret wrote her husband:
"I have taken the measure of the dining chamber (withdrawing chamber).

or solar) there as you would your coffee (breakfast) and your company
(1)
(counter or sitting desk) should be set for the while."

There would be a large wall fireplace in the hall, and possibly one
of the new bay windows, soon to become such a feature of Tudor dwellings, for
glass was coming to be more common. Windows were highly valued and were so
constructed as to be movable. When the Baron of Osmund left the rectory
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(3)
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Halls in the better houses were usually hung with tapestries, often
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Furniture was still somewhat scanty and crude. Chests and fire-
places mentioned, as containing money, glass, clothes, books, or other
(5)
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There is a bewildering number of chambers mentioned in the
(7)
inventory accompanying Sir John Pastoll's will, showing how great a
number of servants, retainers, and dependents such a house provided for.
Other apartments listed include the cellar, the buttery, the brew house, and
the kitchen.

(1)	P.L. 185	(4)	P.L. 333
(2)	P.L. 319	(5)	P.L. 333, 336, 370, 384
(3)	P.L. 143	(6)	P.L. 333

The bedrooms seem to have been most comfortable. Each had its great bed, hung round with curtains as a warrant of privacy, and a protection against drafts. Several "payres of schetys" usually go with each, as well as the "fedder-bedde," blankets, bolster, coverlet, and sometimes a "pyllowe of down." Even the "Coke is Chambour" (Cook's chamber) has its "redde coverlyte of rosys and blood houndys hedys."⁽¹⁾ Store-rooms and armours were each well-stocked.

The kitchen utensils make a fascinating list. The Pastons had at Hellesdon:

2 dozen pewter vessels	4 great brass pans
3 pots of brass	1 gridiron
2 broaches (spits)	1 dressing knife
2 pot-hooks	1 little brass pan
1 axe	holding $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon
2 iron rakes	An almary (cupboard) to keep meat in (2)

The kitchen at Caister was much more elaborately equipped. The buttry housed table linen, knives of several kinds, bottles of all sizes, and the great collection of plate, including silver or silver-gilt, dishes, saucers, basins, salt-cellars, and "pottles".⁽³⁾ Candlesticks also were of silver, though laton and pewter were also common.

Another apartment must not be over-looked. It was the private chapel attached to most houses of importance, and was usually well furnished with vestments and hangings.

Taken all in all, the Paston inventories should disabuse our minds of any idea that living conditions of the time were still crude. On the contrary, they had much of comfort and of luxury, even though they still fell far short of modern requirements.

2. PROVISION OF FOOD

To an extent difficult for modern thought to grasp, feeding a

(1) P.L. 336
(2) P.L. 978
(3) P.L. 336

The bathroom seems to have been most comfortable. Each had its great bed, hung round with curtains as a screen of privacy, and a protection against drafts. Several "purses of sheets" usually go with each, as well as the "bedder-bedder," blankets, bolster, coverlet, and sometimes a "pillow of down." Even the "Coke is Cheaper" (Coke's Chamber) has its "redde coverlet" (1) of terry and blood warming beds. (2) Before-room and sitting room were well-

stocked.

The kitchen usually makes a fascinating list. The Pattons had as

follows:

2 dozen better vessels	2 green glass pans
2 sets of brass	1 grilliron
2 broaches (spits)	1 dressing knife
2 pot-hooks	1 little brass pan
1 axe	holding 2 gallon
2 iron racks	an empty (cupboard) to
	keep meat in (3)

The kitchen at Colster was much more elaborately equipped. The butter housed table linen, knives of several kinds, bottles of all sizes, and the great collection of plates, including silver or silver-gilt, dishes, (2) sauceurs, basins, salt-cellars, and "pottles". Candlish also were of silver, though later and better were also common.

Another apartment must not be over-looked. It was the private chapel attached to most houses of importance, and was usually well furnished with vestments and hangings.

Taken all in all, the Patton inventories should disclose our minds of any idea that living conditions of the time were still crude. On the contrary, they had much of comfort and of luxury, even though they still fell far short of modern requirements.

1. PROVISIONS OF FOOD

To an extent difficult for modern thought to grasp, feeding a

household meant much more than the preparation of meals. One must remember that the household included not only the family, but a large and variable number of servants, and retainers.

In the case of the Pastons, food for weeks or months ahead must have had to be on hand if, as happened more than once, the family had to stand siege. The brew-house, the bake house, the dairy and other such "offices" were always busy. The cellar, the buttry, the pantry, and the larder must always be well stocked. Paston's bailiff reported in November that he had been able to lay in sufficient beef (salted, of course) to last till "Fastegang" ⁽¹⁾ (Lent). Of course the process of perserving food in this way was under the charge of the housewife, and was only one of such operations continuously in progress. ⁽²⁾ In Sir John Fastolf's larder were these utensils for such use:

3 great standing tubs	1 barrel	(3)
2 salting tubs	1 butcher's axe	

Fish also was laid in in the same way, and had to be secured well in advance for Lent. Margaret wrote her husband, "as for herring, I have bought a horse-load for 4s. 6d. I can get no eels yet." ⁽⁴⁾ Her bailiff wrote her thriftily one Autumn, "Madam, it were good to remember your stuff of herring now this fishing time. I have got me a friend in Lowestoft to help to buy me seven or eight barrel, and they (shall) not cost me above 6s. 8d. a barrel." ⁽⁵⁾ Fish ponds, or stews, were a valuable feature of many estates, from which came occasional supplies of fresh fish. ⁽⁶⁾

Naturally the routine matters of housekeeping escape mention in the letters. Such things as bread, butter, and beer were frequently all made

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| (1) P.L. 425 | (4) P.L. 149 |
| (2) Bennett P. 100 | (5) P.L. 149 |
| (3) P.L. 336 | (6) P.L. 25 |

household means more than the possession of wealth. One must remember that the household included not only the family, but a large and varied number of servants, and retainers.

In the case of the Parsons, food for weeks or months ahead must have had to be on hand if, as happened more than once, the family had to remain alone. The new-modes, the cake house, the dairy and other such "retainers" were always ready. The cellar, the dairy, the family, and the kitchen must always be well stocked. Father's outfit reported in November that he had been able to pay in sufficient part (a list, of course) to last till "February" (1900). Of course the records of "expending food in this way are under the charge of the household, and not only one of each

operation continuously in progress. In Sir John Lubbock's garden were

these utensils for each use:

- | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|-----|
| 3 great standing tubs | 1 barrel | (2) |
| 2 salting tubs | 1 potter's ear | |

This also was laid in the scullery, and had to be secured well in advance for Lent. Margaret wrote her husband, "as far as having, I have begun a house-look for the 25. I can get no salt yet." Her belief? wrote her daughter one autumn, "which, if you had to remember your story of having now this fishing time. I have got as a fish in baskets to help to pay as seven or eight barrels, and they (shells) not cost as above (3) 25. 00. a barrel." Fish ponds or stocks, with a valuable feature of many varieties, from which some occasional supplies of trout fish.

Naturally the routine matters of housekeeping occupy position in the kitchen. Such things as bread, butter, and beer were frequently all made

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| (1) 25. 00 | (4) 25. 00 |
| (2) 25. 00 | (5) 25. 00 |
| (3) 25. 00 | (6) 25. 00 |

in the house. Other stores came from the surrounding country-side, or from nearby towns like Norwich. Foreign goods caused the house-wife more trouble, and Margaret was often begging her husband to keep her supplied. "I pray you that you will vouchsafe to send me another sugar loaf, for my old one is done." ⁽¹⁾ Again she asked her son to let her know the price of pepper, cloves, mace, ginger, cinnamon, almonds, rice, saffron "raysonys of Corons" (i.e. Corinth, whence modern currants.) and ganingal. ⁽²⁾ Dates and oranges were frequently asked for. ⁽³⁾ Sir John sent his brotheer "two pots of oil for sallads," ⁽⁴⁾ which indicates that vegetables must have been at least somewhat in use, although not yet common. Treacle was often sent from town: "I send you by Barker, the bearer hereof, three treacle pots of Geane (Genoa) my brother John sent to me for two, therefore I beseech you that he may have at least the one; there is one pot that is marked under the bottom two times, with these letters M.P., which pot I have best trust unto, and next to him the wryghe (twisted?) pot, and I mistrust most the pot that hath a krott (a crack?) ⁽⁵⁾ above on the top, lest he hath been undone." Treacle was valued apparently for its medicinal quality.

3. SICKNESS AND ITS CARE

This brings to notice the fact that the fifteenth century housewife must needs be ready to minister to illness of all the lesser sorts. Margaret wished her husband would come home from London, since ⁽⁶⁾ "Your sore might be as well looked to here!" While Margaret was away from home she wrote in anxiety about her cousin Berney: "I pray you give my white wine or any of my waters....that may do him comfort....water of mint ⁽⁷⁾ or water of millefoil (yarrow) were good for my cousin Berney."

(1) P.L. 178

(2) P.L. 681

(3) P.L. 62 & 637

(4) P.L. 692

(5) P.L. 563

(6) P.L. 36

(7) P.L. 716

in the house. Other stores came from the surrounding country-side, or from
 nearly towns like Norwich. Foreign goods came the same way as the domestic,
 and Margaret was often begging her husband to keep her supplied. "I pray you
 that you will vouchsafe to send me another sugar loaf, for my old one is
 done." (1) Again she asked her son to let her know the price of sugar, cloves,
 mace, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, rice, saffron, saffron of Carthage (2),
 Coriander, anise, nutmeg, cardamom, and ginger. (3) Dates and oranges were the
 generally asked for. Sir John sent his brother "two pots of oil for salve,"
 which indicated that vegetables must have been at least somewhat in use,
 although not yet common. Treacle was often sent from town: "I send you by
 brother John sent to me for two, therefore I beseech you that he may have as
 much as he needs, three treacle pots of Geane (Gean)...." (4)
 least the one; there is one pot that is marked under the bottom of a dish,
 with these letters R.T., which pot I have sent first unto, and next to him
 the other (5) pot, and I shal send next the pot that hath a brood (6)
 cracke) above on the top, lest he hath been undone." Treacle was valued

apparently for its medicinal quality.

3. SICKNESS AND ITS CARE

This brings to notice the fact that the fifteenth century
 household must needs be ready to minister to illness of all the lesser
 sorts. Margaret wished her husband would come home from London, since
 "Your care might be as well looked to have." (1) While Margaret was away from
 home she wrote in anxiety about her cousin Henry: "I pray you give my
 whole care and any of my waters.... that may do him comfort.... water of mint
 or water of millifolli (Yarrow) were good for my cousin Henry." (2)

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|-----|----------|-----|----------|-----|----------|
| (1) | P.L. 178 | (4) | P.L. 638 | (7) | P.L. 718 |
| (2) | P.L. 681 | (5) | P.L. 638 | | |
| (3) | P.L. 687 | (6) | P.L. 68 | | |

John (3) wrote his wife to send him "in all haste possible... a large plaster of your Flos Unguentorum for the King's attorney, James Hobart; for his disease is but an ache in his knee; he is the man that brought you and me together, and I had lever than 40L. ye could with your plaster depart him and his pain. But when ye send me the plaster, ye must send me writing how it should be laid to and taken from his knee; and how long it should abide on his knee unremoved; and how long the plaster will last good; and whether he must lap any more clothes about the plaster to keep it warm or not."⁽¹⁾

4. CLOTHING

To provide clothing and household linen for her family and dependents must have been another considerable item in the medieval housewife's duties. The inventory of Fastolf's property⁽²⁾ lists a most amazing amount of household textiles - sheets, bed-hangings, pillows, testers, blankets, quilts, and so on - the linen and woolen materials for which were probably for the most part woven and made up, by maids and girls who "boarded out", under the mistress's supervision, as were also the tablecloths, napkins and towels.⁽³⁾

In addition to household necessities, any well-furnished houses of families like the Pastons were decorated with many hangings for walls, beds, and so on. The inventories⁽⁴⁾ list numberless such items. Sometimes they were of tapestry or "cloths of arras, of hunting or hawking" or "a covering for a bed of arras, with hunting of the boar, a man in blue, with a jagged hood, white and red." Often they must have been of silk or wool embroidered at home: "a covering with a giant smiting a boar with a spear;" "a tester with a gentlewoman in green, taking a mallard in her hands;" "a pillow of

(1) P.L. 898

(2) P.L. 335

(3) P.L. 988 and Bennett p.53 & 4.

(4) P.L. 336 and 988

John () wrote his wife to send him "in all haste possible..."

large plaster of your face (symptoms for the King's attorney, James Robert;
 for his disease is not in his knee; no in the man that brought you
 and me together, and I had never then felt. Ye could wish your plaster against
 him and his pain. But when ye sent me the plaster, ye must send me writing
 how it should be laid to and taken from his knee; and how long it should
 abide on his knee unremoved; and how long the plaster will last good; and
 whether he must lay any more clothes about the plaster to keep it warm or
 not."

4. PLASTER

To provide clothing and household linen for her family and
 dependent must have been another considerable item in the medieval household's
 budget. The inventory of Pastoll's property lists a most amazing amount of
 household textiles - sheets, bed-spreads, pillows, curtains, blankets, gowns,
 and so on - the linen and woolen materials for which were probably for the
 most part woven and made up, by maids and girls who "worked out", under the
 estate's supervision, as were also the tablecloths, napkins and towels.
 In addition to household necessities, my well-furnished houses of
 families like the Pastolls were decorated with many hangings for walls, beds,
 and so on. The inventories list numberless such items. Sometimes they
 were of tapestry or "colours of arras", of hunting or "hunting" or "a covering
 for a bed of arras, with hunting of the bear, a man in blue, with a jagged
 hood, white and red." Often they must have been of silk or wool embroidered
 or painted with a giant sitting a bear with a spear; "a cover
 with a golden bear in green, taking a maid in her hands;" "a pillow of

(1)	W.L. 300	(2)	W.L. 300 and Bennett p. 25 & 26
(2)	W.L. 300	(3)	W.L. 300 and 301

silk, the ground white with lilies of blue." One marvels at the amount of needlework done in ancient manor houses and castles, some of it by the mistresses themselves. Agnes Paston wrote her husband; "I pray you to buy for me two pipes of gold," i.e., rolls of gold thread for embroidery. (1)

Material for clothing was often made to order, and, since all weaving was still a home industry, Margaret Paston had need to look ahead and give her orders in time. When her husband wanted her to get cloth for livery for his retainers, she reported:

"As touching your liveries, there can be none got here for the color you would have, neither murrey, (mulberry) nor blue, nor good russetenough of one cloth and color to serve you.....it will not be purveyed now in time without they had warning at Michaelmas. (2)

Over and over again Margaret asks someone to get things for her in London either because of poor choice in Norwich, or to save money.

"I pray you that you will buy some frieze to make your child's gowns. You shall have best cheap and best choice of Huy's wife as it is told meAnd that you will buy a yard of broad-cloth of black for an hood for me.....As for the child's gowns, if I have (the stuff), I will get them made. (3)

Agnes even asked her son to match silk! "I pray you that you will pay.....for four ounces and an half of silk....and bring with you a quarter of an ounce even like the same that I send you closed in this letter." (4)

How interesting it would be to know just how much an "ounce" of silk was!

John (1) on the other hand, wanted the home-grown article, and sent to his wife for "two ells of worsted for doublets." This cloth took

(1) P.L. 25
(2) P.L. 260

(3) P.L. 67
(4) P.L. 138

...the ground with lilies of blue." One arrival at the house of
...in ancient manner houses and castles, some of it by the
...themselves. Agnes Weston wrote her husband; "I pray you to buy
(1)
...for as two ships of gold," i.e., rolls of gold thread for embroidery.

...essential for clothing was often made to order, and, since all
...weaving was still a home industry, Margaret Weston had need to look ahead
...and give her orders in time. When her husband wanted her to get cloth for
...livery for his retainers, she reported:

"As concerning your liveries, there can be none yet here for the
...color you would have, neither purple, (purple) nor blue, nor good red
...enough of one cloth and color to serve you....it will not be purveyed
(2)
...now in time without they had warning at Westminster.

Over and over again Margaret asks someone to get things for her
...in London either because of poor choice in Norwich or to save money.
"I pray you that you will buy some livers to make your child's
...gown. You shall have best cheap and best choice of my wife as it is
...told me....and that you will buy a yard of broad-cloth of black for an
...hood for me....for the child's gown, if I have (the cloth), I will get
(3)
...them made."

Agnes even asked her son to watch him! "I pray you that you will
...for four gowns and an half of silk....and bring with you a quarter
(4)
...of an ounce even like the case that I sent you closed in this letter."

How interesting it would be to know just how much an "ounce" of silk was!
John (1) on the other hand, wanted the home-grown article, and
sent to his wife for "two ells of worsted for doublets." This cloth took

its name, it is interesting to remember, from a small market-town in the eastern part of Norfolk, and so John would, as he said, "make my doublet all
(1)
worsted for the worship of Norfolk."

Silk clothing was evidently made up away from home, for Sir John writes some news of a lady "as she told herself to my silkmaid, which maketh
(2)
part of such as she shall wear."

How women dressed in those days is revealed in the letters and inventories. Margaret asked her husband "to buy a piece of black buckram for to line with a gown for me, I should buy me a murrey gown to go in this summer; and lay in the collar the satin that ye gave me for an hood; and I
(3)
can get none good buckram in this town to line it with."

Margery said, "my mother sent to my father to London for a gown cloth of mustyrdevyllrs (probably a kind of velvet) to make a gown for me.... I have no gown to wear this winter but my black and my green a lyer (green-omillere - frog color?).

Accessories seem to have been important: There are several requests for collars - "send me some Norfolk thread, to do about my neck, to ride
(4)
with!" "I pray you that ye will vouchsafe to remember to purvey a thing for
(5)
my neck, and to do make (have made) my girdle." "I pray you that you will do your cost on me against Whitsuntide, that I may have something for my neck, when the queen was here, I borrowed my cousin Elizabeth Clere's device, for I durst not go for shame with my beads among so many fresh gentlewomen as
(6)
here were at that time." The eternal feminine!

The inventory of Dame Elizabeth Browne (née Paston, so harshly treated in her youth by her mother, as noted above) contains mention of "a

(1) P.L. 528
(2) P.L. 747
(3) P.L. 472

(4) P.L. 251
(5) P.L. 196
(6) P.L. 187

its name, it is interesting to remember, from a small notebook in the
western part of Norfolk, and so John would, as he said, "write up something all
(1)
worsted for the wearing of Norfolk."

With clothing was evidently made up many from home, for Sir John
wrote some more of a lady "as she told herself to my friend, which means
(2)
part of such as she shall wear."

How women dressed in those days is revealed in the letters and
inventories. Margaret asked her husband "to buy a piece of black buckram
for to line with a gown for me, I should buy me a merry gown to go in this
summer; and lay in the collar the same that ye gave me for an hood; and I
(3)
can get some good buckram in this town to line it with."

Margaret said, "my mother sent to my father to London for a gown
cloth of sayetyng (probably a kind of velvet) to make a gown for me....
I have no gown to wear this winter but my black and my green a liver (green-
coloured) - frog colour?."

Accessories seem to have been important: There are several requests
for collars - "send me some Norfolk turned, to do about my neck, to ride
(4)
with." "I pray you that ye will vouchsafe to remember to purvey a thing for
(5)
my neck, and to do mine (have made) my girle." "I pray you that ye will do
your best on me against Christmas, that I may have something for my neck,
when the queen was here, I borrowed my cousin Elizabeth Clere's gown, for
I durst not go for shame with my backe among so many fine gentlemen as
(6)
have were at that time." The eternal reminder!

The inventory of Dame Elizabeth Browne (née Foster, nee Brown)
listed in her youth by her mother, as noted above, contains mention of a

(1) F.L. 326	(4) F.L. 321
(2) F.L. 327	(5) F.L. 138
(3) F.L. 475	(6) F.L. 137

violet'gowne', furred with martrons, a black furred with gray, a black furred with white, a black furred with martons, and a night-gown furred with martrons,⁽¹⁾ all sober in hue, as befitted an elderly matron.

More frequent mention is made in the letters of men's apparel, since they were so much away from home. Requests are sent over and over again for "gowns"; "a fine gown of musterdeuillers furred with fine beavers, one gown of fine perse blue, furred with martens; and two gowns, one furred with bogey (budge) and on other lined with frieze."⁽²⁾ "I pray you send me a new vestment of white damask for a deacon, which is amongst mine other gear at Norwich," wrote Sir John (2), about to set out for Calais, "I will make an arming doublet of it, though I should have another gown of velvet for another vestment."⁽³⁾ And again, "I would in all haste possible have that same gown of puke (devilish (Puck) hence dark?) furred with white lamb."⁽⁴⁾ When in difficulties he was forced "to repledge out my gown of velvet and other gear."⁽⁵⁾

Young gentlemen in the service of great noblemen were obliged to wear their patron's livery, we learn. "I have but one gown at Framlingham and another here, and that is my livery gown," wrote John (3) while in the train of the Duke of Norfolk.

From Norwich, John (3) sent to London post-haste for hose, "Also, mother I beseech you that there might be purveyed two pair of hose, one pair black and another pair of russett, which be ready made for me at the hosiers with the crooked back, next to the Black Friar's gate within Ludgate; and the black hose be paid for, he will send me the russet unpaid for; I beseech you that this gear be not forgotten, for I have not an whole

(1) P.L. 988
(2) P.L. 99
(3) P.L. 725

(4) P.L. 771
(5) P.L. 840
(6) P.L. 463

violated, turned with someone, a black turned with grey, a black turned with white, a black turned with purple, and a light-green turned with purple. (1) all other in me, as belated an elderly man.

Some fragment mention is made in the letters of men's apparel, which they wear so much away from home. Payments are sent over and over again for "gowns"; a fine gown of madderdyllers turned with fine beavers, one gown of fine horse hide, turned with madderdyllers; two gowns, one turned with (2) doggy (badger) and on other lined with fur. "I try you send me a new vestment of white damask for a dress, which is madderdyllers like other gear of Norwich." wrote Sir John (3), about to set out for Calais. "I will write an evening doublet of it, though I should have another gown of velvet for another vestment." And again, "I would in all haste possibly have this gown of purple (4) (badger) (badger) turned with white fur." Then in difficulties he was forced "to replace one of gown of velvet and other gear." (5)

Young gentlemen in the service of great noblemen were obliged to wear their patron's livery, as I have seen at Stratford and another time, and that is my livery gown," wrote John (6) while in the train of the Duke of Norfolk.

From Norwich, John (7) sent to London horse-gear for horse. "Also, when I beseech you that there might be purveyed two pairs of horse, one pair black and another pair of madderdyllers, which he needs for me at the point with the crooked back, next to the Black Friars' gate within Ludgate; and the black horse be paid for, he will send me the money unpaid for; I beseech you that this gear be not forgotten, for I have not an whole

(1)	2.1. 208	(4)	2.1. 271
(2)	2.1. 20	(5)	2.1. 240
(3)	2.1. 253	(6)	2.1. 222

(1)
hose to don; I trow they shall not cost both pair 8s."

Hats, too, were ordered from London. "I pray you send me an hat and a bonnet by the same man, and let him bring the hat upon his head for (fear of) misfashioning it; I have need to both, for I may not ride nor go out at the doors with none that I have, they be so lewd (shabby); a murrey bonnet, and a black or a tawney hat." (2)

William Paston, at Eton, showed what was needed by a schoolboy of those days: "I beseech you to send me a hose cloth, one for the holydays of some color, and another for the working days how coarse soever it be maketh no matter, and a stomacher, and two shirts, and a pair of slippers." (3)

Clement at Cambridge had "a short green gown, a short muster-devillers gown a short blue gown.... a side russet gown furred with beaver was made this time two years; and a side murrey gown was made this time twelve-month...." (4)
"They that be bare, let them be raised (have a new nap set upon them)" (5) is an interesting note on renovation of clothing.

5. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Nowhere is the difference between our own day and the fifteenth century more apparent than in the relation of parent and child. Repression, obedience, and deference seem to have been ironclad conventions. When writing to their parents, sons even when grown always used the most respectful language: "Most reverent and worshipful father, I recommend me heartily and submit my lowly unto you, beseeching you of your blessing and good fatherhood," (6)
"Right reverent and worshipful mother, I recommend me to you as humbly as I can think" etc. (7)

That this was no empty convention appears when John (3) had in

(1) P.L. 526

(2) P.L. 602

(3) P.L. 824

(4) P.L. 311

(5) P.L. 311

(6) P.L. 410

(7) P.L. 585

(1)

none to come; I know they shall not come to the fair.

Halt, too, were ordered from London. "I have seen him in the

and a contact by the same man, and let him bring the hat upon his head for

(fear of) mistaking it; I have seen to both, for I may not ride now to

out at the door with none that I have, they be so hard (silly); I have

(2)

bonnet, and a black or a tawny hat."

"I am Peter, at home, showed what was needed by a schoolboy of

those days: "I beseech you to send me a horse cloth, one for the holsters

of some color, and another for the working days now scarce soever it be

(3)

rather no matter, and a broomstick, and two shirts, and a pair of slippers."

Element of Cambridge had "a short green gown, a short master-

Devil's gown.... a short blue gown.... a side-sleeved gown lined with

beaver was made this time the gown; and a side-sleeved gown was made this

(4)

time twelve months.... "They that be here, let them be raised (have a

(5)

new lay out upon them" is an interesting note on renovation of clothing.

3. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Nowhere is the difference between our own day and the

thirteenth century more apparent than in the relation of parent and child.

Impatience, obedience, and deference seem to have been universal conventions.

Remembering to their parents, some even when grown almost used the word

respectful language: "Most reverent and worshipful father, I beseech you

hastily and humbly to let me have your blessing and

(6)

good fellowship." "Right reverent and worshipful mother, I beseech you

(7)

to put me humbly as I can think."

That this was no empty convention appears when John (8) and in

(8) 2.1.111
(8) 2.1.111
(8) 2.1.111

(8) 2.1.111
(8) 2.1.111
(8) 2.1.111

some way deeply offended his father. His letter of apology is earnest and almost abject. "I beseech you of your fatherly pity to tender the more (kindly) this simple writing; if there be any service that I may do.... I will be as glad to do it as anything on earth, if it were anything that might be to your pleasing." ⁽¹⁾ Margaret was most careful not to take her son's part against the father, but she did finally venture to report "as for his demeaning since you departed, it has been right good, and lowly and diligent I hope he is chastised, and will be worthier hereafter." ⁽²⁾ The lad had to bear several weeks of his father's silence, but was ultimately forgiven.

One can not escape feeling that considerable coldness and detachment marked the relation between parents and their children. Agnes's harsh treatment of her daughter Elizabeth, quoted above, was not much worse than Margaret's severity toward her daughter Margery in regard to her betrothal to Richard Calle.

6. TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

One unusual custom of the period was perhaps both cause and effect of this coldness; namely, the arrangement called "boarding out". Both girls and boys were often sent to live with some relative, or in the house of some important person, sometimes as another means of securing patronage. Neither Agnes nor Margaret wanted their daughters at home. Agnes's daughter, so placed, evidently complained to her mother, whose only reply was "she ~~must~~ use (accustom) herself to work readily, as other gentlewomen do, and somewhat to help herself therewith." ⁽³⁾

From the days of Clement, the yeoman farmer, who borrowed money

- (1) P.L. 323
- (2) P.L. 325
- (3) P.L. 311

some very deeply offended his father. His letter of apology is earnest and almost apologetic. "I beseech you of your fatherly pity to consider the same

(kindly) with simple writing; ... it were for my service that I may do...

I will be as glad to do it as anything on earth, it is more anything that

(1) might be to your, dearest. Margaret has most certainly not to take her

son's part against the father, but she did finally venture to report "as

for his dearest since you departed, ... it has been right good, and fairly

(2) and diligent ... I hope he is satisfied, and will be "Cousin Margaret."

The fact had to bear several weeks of his father's silence, but was distinctly

forgiven.

One can not escape feeling that considerable coldness and detachment

must have been the relation between parents and their children. Agnes's birth

circumstances of her daughter Elizabeth, stated above, was not much more than

Margaret's severity toward her daughter Mary in regard to her betrothal

to Richard Cullen.

6. TRAINING AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One unusual custom of the period was perhaps both common and

effect of this coldness, namely, the arrangement called "boarding out."

Both girls and boys were often sent to live with some relative, or in the

house of some important person, sometimes as another means of securing

patronage. Neither Agnes nor Margaret wanted their daughters at home.

Agnes's daughter, so placed, evidently complained to her mother, whose only

reply was "she must use (acquiesce) herself to work readily, as other

(3) gentlewomen do, and somewhat to help herself therewith."

From the days of Elizabeth, the young woman, who borrowed money

- (1) 1.1. 225
- (2) 1.1. 225
- (3) 1.1. 211

to set his son William to school, an action which set him on the road to success and the founding of a great family, the Pastons had valued education. Details are lacking in many cases. They had a domestic chaplain, one of whose duties was, no doubt, to teach the children of the family. John (3) asked his mother to see that the chaplain was "a good master to little Jack (1) and learns him well."

Several Pastons went to Cambridge; John (1) was there for several years (2) starting in his early teens. (3)

Clement was sent by his mother, Agnes, to Cambridge, where he neglected his learning, so that he was put under a private tutor, Mr. Greenfield, in London, where she sent directions: "If he hath not done well, nor will not amend, pray him that he will truly belash him till he will amend; and so did the last master, and the best that ever he had at Cambridge." (4) Evidently, educational methods were somewhat different from those at present considered to meet university requirements.

In the next generation Walter was sent to Oxford by his mother, Margaret, who desired him to "do well, learn well, and be of good rule and disposition and not to be too hasty of taking of Orders that should bind him for I will love him better to be a good secular man than a lewd (ignorant) priest." (5) Walter remained at Oxford over six years, when he finally took his degree. He was disappointed that delay in delivering letters prevented his brother, Sir John, from attending his "determining feast." (6) Unhappily he died about a month later. (7)

His younger brother, Walter, was sent to Eton, whence he wrote home for money to pay some small debts. He was complacent of his attain-

(1) P.L. 585

(2) P.L. 29

(3) Bennett, p.103

(4) P.L. 716

(5) P.L. 830 & 831

(6) P.L. 834-6

(7) P.L. 824 & 827

to rest his son William to school, an action which set him on the road to success and the founding of a great family. The Parsons had valued education. William was looking in many cases. They had a domestic chaplain, one of whose duties was, no doubt, to teach the children of the family. John (1) asked his mother to see that the chaplain was a good master to little Jack and looked him well."

Several students went to Cambridge; John (1) was there for several years, starting in his early teens.

William was sent to his mother, Henry, to Cambridge, where he neglected his learning, so that he was put under a private tutor, Dr. Brownfield, in London, where she sent him with the intention: "If he learn not some well, nor will not amend, pray his father that he will be truly helped till he will amend; and so did the last master, and the best that ever he had at Cambridge."

Evidently, educational methods were somewhat different from those at present considered to meet university requirements.

In the next generation Walter was sent to Oxford by his mother, Margaret, who desired him to "be well, learn well, and be of good will and disposition And not to be too ready of taking of orders that should bind him for I will love him better to be a good secular man than a bad (ignorant) priest." Walter remained at Oxford over six years, when he finally took his degree. He was disappointed that delay in delivering letters prevented his brother, Sir John, from attending his "determining."

His younger brother, Robert, was sent to Eton, whence he wrote home for money to pay some small debts. He was complainant of his retain-

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| (1) P.L. 352 | (4) P.L. 718 |
| (2) P.L. 35 | (5) P.L. 680 & 681 |
| (3) Domestic, 4.103 | (6) P.L. 734-5 |
| | (7) P.L. 682 & 687 |

ments. "I lack nothing but versifying," and presented therewith a not over distinguished sample of his skill. A considerable portion of his letter was given over to the description of a "young gentlewoman" who appealed to his fancy, and his eye for an advantageous match.⁽¹⁾

The girls of the Paston family probably received little more book-learning than that given by the family chaplain. Yet their skill in letter writing and their marked efficiency in dealing with practical affairs shows that their education could not have been wholly neglected.⁽²⁾

7. BOOKS

Books must have played a real part in the lives of the Pastons, and their friends. John⁽¹⁾'s friend, William Worcester, said that he "would be as glad and as fain of a good book of French, or of poetry, as my master Fastolf would be to purchase a fair manor."⁽³⁾ Sir John⁽²⁾ seems to have been a great book-lover. As printing was not introduced into England until 1474, books mentioned earlier must have been in manuscript.

One letter is from William Ebesham, whose business appears to have been to copy books. He sent Sir John an itemized account of all the works he had transcribed by "my labor in the great book which I wrote unto your said good mastership." Ebesham's charges seem to have been about 2d. a folio leaf, fairly good wages, apparently. But the bill had been long unpaid, and he begged humbly to have it paid, asked Paston to send one of his old gowns, and ended by beseeching God "to preserve you from all adversity; I am somewhat acquainted with it."⁽⁴⁾ He had made for Sir John what he called a Great Book, into which were collected a great many diverse kinds of reading. There were 26 pages concerning the coronation and the

(1) P. L. 824 and 827

(3) P.L. 318

(2) Bennett, pp. 109 and 110

(4) P.L. 596

"I lack nothing but verifying," and suggested that with a not over distinguished sample of his skill. A considerable portion of his letter was given over to the description of a "young gentleman" who appeared to him fancy, and his eye for an advantageous match.

The girls of the Boston family probably received little more satisfactory than that given by the family chaplain. Yet their skill in letter writing and their marked efficiency in dealing with practical affairs show that their education could not have been wholly neglected.

V. Books

Books must have played a real part in the lives of the Boston, and their friends. John (1)'s friend, William Worcester, said that he "would be as glad and as vain of a good book of French, or of poetry, as my master Passoll would be to possess a fair manuscript." Sir John (1) seems to have been a great book-lover. As printing was not introduced into England until 1476, books mentioned earlier must have been in manuscript.

One letter is from William Brewster, whose business appears to have been to copy books. He sent Sir John an itemized account of all the volumes he had transcribed by "my labor in the great book which I wrote unto you and good mastership." Brewster's charges seem to have been about \$2. 10 for 100 folios, fairly good paper, apparently. But the bill had been long unpaid, and he begged humbly to have it paid. "I asked reason to send one of his old books, and asked by borrowing but 'to preserve you from all adversity, I am somewhat acquainted with it.'" He had asked for Sir John what he called a Great Book, into which were collected a great many diverse kinds of reading. There were 22 pages concerning the navigation and the

(1) P. 1. 324 and 327
(2) Brewster, pp. 103 and 110
(3) P. 1. 324
(4) P. 1. 326

duties of knighthood, 120 pages of a treatise on war, an 86 page treatise on wisdom, 56 pages on the rules of chivalry, and 90 pages containing a transcript of Hoccleve's "De Regimine Principum". For ornament he had rubricated the whole; that is, either done all the capitals in red, or written the titles in red. This Great Book is now Lansdowne Ms. 285 in the British Museum. (1)

When James Gloys, the family chaplain, died, Sir John asked his mother to send the priest's books to him in London, unless they were claimed by those to whom Sir James had willed them. A few days after he asks again for the books, and once more a fortnight later. His mother at length replied "As for the books that ye desired to have of Sir James's, the best of all and the fairest is claimed." (2) (3) (4) (5)

An inventory of Sir John's books is most interesting, mentioning, among other titles, books on the Death of Arthur, on Guy, Earl of Warwick, Richard Coeur de Lyon, The Parliament of Birds, The Green Knight; and several "in quires", that is, in paper covers, including Ovid's De Arte Amandi, and Cicero's De Senectute, De Amicitia. (6)

Only one is mentioned as being "in preent."

III THE WOMAN OF AFFAIRS

I MANAGEMENT OF ESTATE

Already it has become apparent that the old adage "a woman's place is in the home" involved in the fifteenth century the interpretation of home as the entire family estate. To an amazing degree the wife shared in her husband's property interests. Both Agnes and Margaret were most competent agents for their husbands.

Agnes all through her life kept a firm grip on all her business

(1) Bennett, p.113
(2) P.L. 745
(3) P.L. 746

(4) P.L. 747
(5) P.L. 752
(6) P.L. 596

duration of his life, the pages of a notebook on art, on the history of
 art, 30 pages on the history of art, and 30 pages containing a list of
 of his own "Le Règne de l'Art". For instance, he had written the
 whole, that is, either some all the details in red, or written the notes in
 red. This Great Book is now known as the 100 in the British Museum.

When James Gifford, the family chaplain, died, Sir John asked his
 father to send the Great Book to him in London, saying that they were of great
 value to him. Sir James had written them. A few days after he had again
 for the book, and once more a fortnight later. The mother at length

replied "As for the book that you desired to have of Sir James, the book is
 all and the father is dead."

An inventory of Sir John's book is most interesting, mentioning
 among other things, books on the death of Arthur, on the death of David,
 Richard Coeur de Lion, The Parliament of Birds, The Green Knight, and several
 "his poems", that is, in paper covers, including Ovid's De Arte Amandi, and
 Cicero's De Senectute, De Amicitia.

(3) Only one is mentioned as being "his poem."

III THE BOOK OF ARTS

I. THE BOOK OF ARTS

Already it has become apparent that the old book "a woman's
 place in the home" involved in the fifteenth century the interpretation of
 home as the entire family estate. To an existing degree the wife owned in
 her husband's property interests. Both Agnes and Margaret were not con-
 sidered agents for their husbands.

Agnes all through her life kept a firm grip on all her business

(1)	Bennett, p. 115	(4)	p. 115
(2)	p. 115	(5)	p. 115
(3)	p. 115	(6)	p. 115

affairs. Even when she asked her son to collect rents from some outlying property, she showed that she knew exactly what was due her:

"I pray you, forget not to bring me my money from Harlingbury, as you come from London. The debt was due at Christmas last at this mid-summer it is 5 pounds more; and though I all ow him all his asking, it is but 26s. and 6d. less." (1) Another letter contained a long itemized report (2) about each of several tenants.

Margaret was quite as capable, as countless of her letters show. She seemed equally able to bargain for a good price for selling barley, to maintain family rights against aggression or to give advice to "shuttle-witted" neighbors. (3) She kept careful accounts to send to her husband in (4) London. (5) She was keen not to lose a good market for barley, malt, or wool, (6) and was most thrifty in buying to the best advantage.

2. STRUGGLE AGAINST LAWLESS AGGRESSION

But ~~it~~^{it} was in times when the Pastons were maintaining their property against aggression that Margaret showed her true quality. As has been said, constant litigation forced the Paston men to be much in London. To such a woman as Margaret they could leave home affairs with full confidence. Gairdner says:

"It was she who negotiated with the farmers, receiving overtures for leases and threats of lawsuits Nor were threats always the worst thing she had to encounter on his account. For even domestic life, in (7) those days, was not always exempt from violence!" When Lord Molyne was striving to secure the Manor of Gresham, a thousand retainers attacked the house when it was occupied only by Margaret and twelve other persons. They

(1) P.L. 70

(2) P.L. 183

(3) P.L. 56

(4) P.L. 465

(5) P.L. 752

(6) P.L. 178

(7) P.L. Introd. p.XXX

broke in the gate, undermined the very chamber where Margaret was, and carried her out by force. Then they pillaged the house, cut the door posts asunder, and left the house practically a ruin.⁽¹⁾

Margaret was entirely competent to uphold Paston rights even to the extent of holding manor courts. When her enemies retorted by seizing tenants' cattle, she got a tenant to prosecute and had the tenants' cattle driven to her own home. She seemed thoroughly to understand the law involved, (some of her letters bristle with law terms,⁽²⁾) and after various vicissitudes,⁽³⁾ took the case before the Judges of the Shire Court and won triumphantly.

All through the struggle for Caister Margaret was constantly helping her husband and her son both by shrewd advice⁽⁴⁾ and by personal aid. After her husband's death she continued for years to manage the estates at home, with the aid of John⁽³⁾, and both her sons depended greatly on her.

IV THE CHURCHWOMAN

1. RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES

No study of medieval life is complete without recognition of the importance of religion in those times. Other contemporary documents, however, are much fuller in reference to ceremonies of the church than are The Paston Letters.

(5)

While baptism and marriage are given only passing mention, we do learn considerable about funeral customs. John Paston died in London in May 1466. After a few days the body was carried from London to Norwich in solemn fashion with a priest and six poor men carrying torches in attendance. At the funeral services there were present Friars of the four Orders,

(1) P.L. 77
(2) P.L. 503, 523

(3) P.L. 518
(4) P.L. 616
(5) P.L. 714 and 696

38 priests, 39 boys in surplice, 26 clerks, a prioress, an anchoress, and 23 nuns. Later the remains were carried to Bronholm Priory, where a further elaborate ceremony was held, with 14 ringers to toll the bells. Over 100 servitors waited on the guests. The extent of preparation and supplies for the funeral feast is indicated by the fact that two men were kept busy for three days flaying the beasts for the repast. (1)

Such elaborate obsequies were followed up by daily or frequent masses for the souls of the departed. (2) Often money was left by will to provide for having masses sung daily. Agnes Paston set aside the rent-charge of one of her manors for a priest to sing for the soul of her husband, William, in Norwich Cathedral, (3) besides arranging for the vicar of Paston to perform masses called "certeynes" every Friday for the souls of William and herself, (4) and to keep the "obit" of Clement, William's father, yearly each 17th of June. (5) Richer people arranged for several priests to sing for them. Even an entire foundation might be instituted with this object in view. Sir John Fastolf left careful directions for the establishment of a College of Priests at Caister, "a college of seven priests, whereof one to be master, and of seven poor folks to pray for....The soul of the said John Fastolf, and such others as he was beholden to, in perpetuity." (6) Sir John (2) tried faithfully to carry out the plan, (7) the last mention of the matter in the letters being in regard to the appointment of "a priest to sing at Caister," (8) The thirtieth day after death, or the "month-mind", was also given special observance. (9)

Though John Paston's funeral had been so elaborate, his sons were very dilatory in erecting a suitable monument to his memory at Bromholm. Five years after his death Sir John asked for measurements of the grave and

(1) P.L. 549
(2) Bennett, p.200
(3) P.L. 153, note
and 555

(4) P.L. 39
(5) P.L. 290
(6) Bennett, p.201
and P.L. 492

(7) P.L. 369 and 382
(8) P.L. 811
(9) P.L. 988

to witness, 30 boys in surprise, 30 chairs, a witness, an usher, and
 30 more. After the service was carried to the main body, where a further
 elaborate ceremony was held, with 15 singers to join the choir. Over 100
 survivors waited on the ground. The extent of preparation was as follows for
 the funeral feast is indicated by the fact that two men were kept busy for
 three days taking care for the feast.

Such elaborate observances were followed up by daily or frequent services
 for the souls of the departed. Often money was left by will to provide for
 having masses sung daily. James Foster set aside the sum of one of
 his estates for a priest to sing for the soul of his daughter, Elizabeth.
 Another arranged for the visit of a priest to his home
 named called "centenary" every Friday for the souls of William and Mary.
 and to keep the "soul" of Elizabeth, William's father, yearly each 15th of June.
 Other people arranged for several priests to sing for them. Even an entire
 foundation might be instituted with this object in view. Sir John Foster

left several directions for the establishment of a College of Priests at
 Calcutta, "a college of seven priests, married one to be master, and six seven
 foot boys to pay for.... The soul of the said John Foster, and such others
 as he was desirous to, in perpetuity." Sir John (2) called Elizabeth to
 carry out the plan, the last mention of the matter in the letters being in
 regard to the appointment of a priest to sing at Calcutta. The children
 day after day, to the "ghost-land", was also given special observance.

Though John Foster's funeral had been so elaborate, his home was
 very simple in meeting a suitable monument to his memory at Greenwich.
 Five years after his death Sir John asked for arrangements of the grave and

(1) E.L. 128	(4) E.L. 20	(7) E.L. 205 and 206
(2) Bennett, 4.200	(5) E.L. 200	(8) E.L. 210
(3) E.L. 125, now	(6) Bennett, 4.201	(9) E.L. 205
and 210	and E.L. 202	

(1)
its surroundings. He delayed, and appeared anxious to have his mother pay for the tomb. County gossip about his neglect failed to spur him on, until more than twelve years had passed, when the family sold a rich cloth-of-gold covering that had been used at the funeral, and with the proceeds erected the tomb at last. (2)

2. PRIVATE CHAPELS AND CHAPLAINS

Like all well-to-do families the Pastons had their private chapel and chaplain. To have mass said there meant a license from the Bishop, (3) and the privilege became a coveted one, and evidence of gentility. Margaret (4) sought repeatedly for perpetual license, first of the Bishop of Norwich and (5) later of the Archbishop of Canterbury, giving as a reason "it is far to the (6) church and I am sickly, and the parson is often out."

Mention of the domestic chaplain is frequent, though seldom in connection with his religious duties. The most prominent of all the Pastons' chaplains was Sir James Gloys, who appears to have been in their service from (7) 1448 to 1473. He became their confidential friend and agent. Indeed Margaret came to lean so much on him that her sons grew to dislike him (8) heartily and to distrust his influence. He must have been an able though (9) unpleasant man, and really devoted and courageous in serving the Pastons.

3. PARISH CHURCHES

Daily attendance at the Chapel was so habitual as to escape mention altogether in the letters. This did not prevent attendance at the parish church, which the home-staying women-folk, we gather, attended some- (10) times on week-days as well as on Sundays and feast-days. That the men of

(1) P.L. 676

(2) P.L. 815

(3) P.L. 554

(4) P.L. 712

(5) P.L. 755

(6) P.L. 751

(7) Bennett, p.227

(8) P.L. 58,59,697

(9) P.L. 146,147,518

(10) P.L.179,201,434

(1)

the circumstances. He believed, and a sound mind to have his father pay
 for the tomb. County, possibly about his neglected failed to even his on, until
 some when some years had passed, when the family sold a rich estate - sold
 covering that had been used at the funeral, but with the proceeds covered the
 tomb itself.

(2)

3. RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

There are well-to-do families the persons and their friends
 of, of this country. To have made this body would a distance from the Bishop,
 and the religious became a revealed one, and evidence of hostility.
 about respectively for personal license, first of the Bishop of Montreal and
 later of the Archbishop of Canterbury, giving an opinion "it is for the
 church and I am ready, and the person is often out."

Section of the domestic origin is frequent, though either in con-
 nection with his religious duties. The most prominent of all the religious

organization was Sir James Ogle, who appears to have been in their service from
 1844 to 1875. He became their confidential friend and agent. Indeed

disputed case to learn so much on his part and soon give to justify his
 hostility and to distrust his influence. He must have been an able lawyer
 and a man, and really devoted and courageous in serving the British.

4. RELIGIOUS OPINIONS

Daily attendance at the Chapel was no habit as to people
 mention altogether in the history. This did not prevent attendance at the
 parish church, when the house of the women-folk, religious, attended some-
 times on week-days as well as on Sundays and feast-days. The end of

(1) 1844-1875	(2) 1844-1875	(3) 1844-1875
(4) 1844-1875	(5) 1844-1875	(6) 1844-1875
(7) 1844-1875	(8) 1844-1875	(9) 1844-1875
(10) 1844-1875	(11) 1844-1875	(12) 1844-1875

the family were not deaf to religious observance is shown by the fact that sermons by their friend Friar Brackley, of the Grey friars at Norwich, are preserved among their documents, written in a curious mixture of English and
(1)
medieval Latin.

The parish church was the real center of parish life, and hence we
(2)
find that business matters were often discussed there, and even the Manor
(3)
court held there.

The parson's performance of his religious duties were too much a matter of routine to be mentioned in the letters. But they do show the parish priest in a variety of roles. Naturally the parson felt himself bound to please the patron of his living. This privilege of appointment was very important to a family like the Pastons who "presented or partly presented, to
(4)
more than twenty different livings in Norfolk." In the parson, the local magnate had a confidential agent to whom he could entrust important documents
(5)
or money for safe-keeping, or upon whom he could call for advice or business service.
(6)

4. THE REGULAR CLERGY

Norfolk was thickly dotted over with abbeys and priories.

"The house of the Austin Friars at Walsingham was second only to Canterbury
(7)
in importance among English pilgrimages."

The Manor of Paston was almost within sight of the famous Priory of Bromholm, made worshipful by a relic of the Holy Cross. Friars must frequently have claimed hospitality of the Pastons. The Abbeys themselves were centers of hospitality. The Duchess of York (accompanied by her household) stayed at the Abbey of St. Benet's in Norfolk in 1475, apparently

(1) P.L. 349, 372

(2) P.L. 162 and 823

(3) Bennett, p.208

(4) Bennett, p.215

(5) P.L. 75 and 11

(6) P.L. 491, 429, 112

(7) Bennett, p. 238

the family were not open to religious observance is shown by the fact that
expressed by their father John H. Carter, of the City of New York, who
preserved among their documents, written in a common dialect of English and
(1)
religiously.

The parish church was the real center of parish life, and hence was
(2)
that most business matters were often discussed there, and even the parish
(3)
court held there.

The parish's performance of his religious duties were too much a
matter of routine to be mentioned in the letters. But they do show the
parish part in a variety of roles. Naturally the parish itself seems
to have been the center of his living. This privilege of appointment was very
important to a family like the Pastors who "presided over parish government, to
(4)
more than twenty different livings in Norfolk." In the parish, the family
signified and a confidential agent to show to family and parish documents
(5)
or money for the parish, or upon whom he could call for advice or help
(6)
was needed.

4. THE PARISH CHURCH

Norfolk was deeply rooted even with its life and religion.
"The house of the parish priest at Bishops was second only to the Bishop's
(7)
in importance among English churches."
The parish of Boston was almost a life right of the parish priest
of Boston, made obligatory by a relic of the Holy Cross. There was
frequently some kind of hostility of the parish. The parish priest
was a member of the parish. The Bishop of York (represented by his
representative) at the Abbey of St. Edmund in 1175, apparently

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| (1) Boston, 1175 | (2) Boston, 1175 |
| (3) Boston, 1175 | (4) Boston, 1175 |
| (5) Boston, 1175 | (6) Boston, 1175 |
| (7) Boston, 1175 | (8) Boston, 1175 |

(1)
for sometime, "if she liked the air." The Abbot of St. Benet's wrote a
(2)
most urbane letter to John Paston, asking him to dinner.

That the houses of the regular clergy were constantly being enriched by gifts of lands and money is evident from letters and wills.

John (1) Paston's will left sums to the Prior and nine monks of Bromholm,
(3)
and also to each of the four Orders in Norwich. Later his wife's will made
(4)
similar bequests in Norwich and Yarmouth. During his life-time, John (1)
gave generously to "Our Lady's House at Walshingham," for which he received a
(5)
letter of thanks. One of the Pastons gave a hundred pounds for erecting
(6)
new choir-stalls at Bromholm.

5. PILGRIMS AND PILGRIMAGES

Such shrines as Walsingham and Bromholm were numerous in Norfolk, and attracted many pilgrims. One of Margaret's earliest letters promised "to go on pilgrimage to Walsingham and to St. Leonard's (at Norwich)"
(7)
to pray for the recovery from illness of her husband, who was in London. Indeed, this shrine of St. Mary's at Walshingham was often visited by high and low; Sir John (2) wrote that "my Lord of Norfolk and my lady were on pilgrimage to our Lady on foot."
(8)

Canterbury was another magnet for pilgrims: "The King and the Queen and much other people are ridden and gone to Canterbury; never so much people
(9)
seen in pilgrimage heretofore at once as men say." In June, 1470, John (3) wrote his brother "I propose to go to Canterbury on foot this next week by
(10)
God's grace."

Pilgrims evidently were treated everywhere with great respect. A band of robbers had been terrorizing Norfolk. "They took two pilgrims, a man

(1) P.L. 761

(2) P.L. 230

(3) P.L. 549

(4) P.L. 861

(5) P.L. 50

(6) P.L. 818

(7) P.L. 36

(8) P.L. 675

(9) P.L. 676

(10) P.L. 641

(1) for sometimes, "it she lifted the air." The about of St. Germain's words a
(2) must remain intact to John Weston, asking him to stand.

That the names of the regular clergy were constantly being an-
nounced by lists of hands and money is evident from letters and other.

John (1) Weston's will left some to the Prior and nine monks of Bromholm.

(2) and also to each of the four houses in Norwich. Later his wife's will was

similar bequests in Norwich and Yarmouth. (3) During his life-time, John (1)

gave generously to "our Lady's House at Norwich," for which he received

letters of thanks. One of the bequests gave a hundred pounds for building

new choir-scholar's Bromholm. (4)

3. RELIGIOUS AND CHARITABLE

Such charities as religious and Bromholm were numerous in

Norfolk, and attracted many pilgrims. One of Weston's earliest letters

promised "to go on pilgrimage to Norwich and to St. Edmund's (at Norwich)"

to pray for the recovery from illness of his daughter, who was in London.

Indeed, this shrine of St. Edmund's at Litchingham was often visited by him and

his wife. (1) wrote that "my Lord of Norwich and my lady were on pilgrim-

age to our Lady on Foot." (2)

Canterbury was another magnet for pilgrims: "The King and the Queen

and many other people are ridden and come to Canterbury; never so many people

seen in this large monastery at once as now say." In June, 1470, John (2)

wrote his brother "I propose to go to Canterbury on foot this next week."

(3) John's friend.

Pilgrims evidently were treated every where with great respect.

and of course had been travelling Norfolk. "They took two pilgrims, a man

(1) 1.1. 151	(2) 1.1. 151	(3) 1.1. 151
(4) 1.1. 151	(5) 1.1. 151	(6) 1.1. 151
(7) 1.1. 151	(8) 1.1. 151	(9) 1.1. 151
(10) 1.1. 151	(11) 1.1. 151	(12) 1.1. 151

and a woman, and they robbed the woman and let her go, and led the man to the sea, and when they knew he was a pilgrim, they gave him money, and set him again on the land."⁽¹⁾

V. THE LETTER WRITER

1. THE LETTERS

The Paston Letters make it certain that the average of literacy among people there represented was rather high. Out of some 158 correspondents at least 43 could write. Not only the Pastons and their friends but the bailiff, the steward, upper servants, agents, and of course the clergy are included in this group. "Some are written in a beautiful hand and others are scarcely legible."⁽²⁾ Most of the letter writers, however, seem to ~~seem to~~ take pen in hand for a definite practical purpose and lay it down with relief as quickly as the task is over. Only occasionally does humor⁽³⁾ lighten their pages. Many of the documents are rough drafts, the fair⁽⁴⁾ copies of which were sent away.

Amanuenses were often used. Margaret in her later years availed herself of the service of Pampling, Lonnor, or Sir James Gloys.⁽⁵⁾ Agnes apologised for her handwriting since she was in too much haste to wait for⁽⁶⁾ "a good secretary", although she wrote very well for an old lady. Very human touches sometimes lighten the letters. John⁽³⁾ excuses himself to his mother "you know my lewd head well enough, I may not write long."⁽⁷⁾ One correspondent ended his letter to John Paston by saying frankly, "I had little to do when I scribbled this letter."⁽⁸⁾ "Written in haste, on St. Peter's day by candle light"⁽⁹⁾ suggests urgency. Sir John sat up late writing to his brother, but consoled himself with the promise, "I will sleep an hour

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|------------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (1) P.L. 80 | (4) Bennett, p.116 | (7) P.L. 787 |
| (2) Bennett, p.114-115 | (5) P.L. 647, 93 | (8) P.L. 269 |
| (3) P.L. 528, 686, 794 | (6) P.L. 25 | (9) P.L. 71 |

and a woman, and they topped the woman and let her go, and let the man go
the way, and when they knew he was a fighter, they gave him money, and let
him again on the bank.

V. THE LATTER PART

1. THE LATTER PART

The latter part of the book is devoted to the average of
literary among people there represented and to the high. Out of the 100
correspondents at least 25 were white. Not only the persons but the
letters had the quality, the strength, the originality, and the
the clarity and insight in this group. "Some are written in a beautiful
hand and others are scarcely legible." Most of the latter writers, however,
seem to see the value of a definite personal purpose and lay it
down with relief as quickly as the task is over. Only occasionally does the
lighter letter appear. Many of the documents are rough drafts, the first
copies of which were sent away.

Answers were often used. The first in the latter part of the
book of the service of writing, however, on the same day.
apologized for the handwriting since she was in too much haste to write for
"a good secretary", although she wrote very well for an old lady. Very
much to be noted sometimes in the letters. John (2) seemed himself to
his mother "you know my hand and will know, I say not write long." One
correspondent ended his letter to John Brown by saying, "I had
little to do when I received this letter." "Written in haste, on St. Peter's
day by candle light." suggests urgency. Dr. John and up late writing so
his mother, but concluded himself with the phrase, "I will sleep on now."

(1)	7.1. 25	(4)	Benjamin, Philip	(7)	7.1. 25
(2)	Benjamin, Philip	(5)	7.1. 25	(8)	7.1. 25
(3)	7.1. 25	(6)	7.1. 25	(9)	7.1. 25

longer tomorrow, because I wrote so long and late tonight." (1) A truly pathetic note was struck by William Lomnor when he reported the murder of the Duke of Suffolk. "I have so washed this little letter with sorrowful tears (2) that you shall read it uneasily."

Letters began with the salutation, which was formal and deferential: "Right worshipful sir, I recommend me to you," might be used to one's friends; "Right worshipful and my especially good mistress, I recommend me to your good favor," by a servant. The body of the letter was written without paragraph breaks. At the end came whatever indication might be vouchsafed of the place or date of composition.

The dates of the letters are especially interesting. Often no mention of the year is made; if any is given it is terms of the King's reign. Sometimes the day and the month are given. "Written at London, 27 of May in (3) the 28th year of King Henry VI" is unusually full. But most of the letters were dated by reference to church festivals - another evidence of the intimate (4) relation of religion to every-day life. "Pulver Wednesday" (Ash Wednesday) (5) or "Crouchmas Day" (The Invention of the Cross) would be well understood, as (6) would "the Thursday next before St. Catherine's Day" or "written Saturday, (7) late at night, next after Candlemas Day."

One who has not seen the originals is curious as to the actual paper on which the letters were written. Bennett says that some of it was smooth and fine, other coarse and thick, but all of it, of course, hand-made. (8) In all probability it was made in France, as the water-marks indicate. (9) Once a shortage of paper is mentioned: "Paper is dainty (scanty)". Letters were folded into small oblong packets, through the folded thicknesses of

(1) P.L. 704
(2) P.L. 93
(3) P.L. 98

(4) P.L. 197
(5) P.L. 472
(6) P.L. 705

(7) P.L. 569
(8) Bennett, pp.125-7
(9) P.L. 178

which a thread was passed. Then the ends of the thread were sealed, and sometimes especially marked to show whether the seal had been tampered with. (1)

2. THE CARRIERS

"The messenger was on horseback while I wrote you this bill," (2) makes one picture how many of these letters must have been sent off. Getting some one trustworthy to carry a letter was often difficult, and caused vexatious delays. "I sent no letter to my father, ever since I departed from you, for I could get no man to London," wrote John (3) when travelling in the train of the Duke of Norfolk. (3) Probably many of the bearers were servants or retainers of the Pastons or their correspondents, and were known to be trustworthy; often their names were given in the letters. People going to the periodical fairs would take letters. "You might at Bartholomew Fair have had (4) messengers enough to London." Letters often were to be answered at once (5) by the same messenger.

3. PRESERVING LETTERS

Numerous pleas are made to the recipients of letters to burn (6) them. But fortunately for posterity the Pastons had as a family the habit of disregarding such advice. Hence this great collection of letters. Margaret reminded her husband after his father's death: "Beware that you keep wisely your writings. Your father, whom God assoil, in his troubled season set more by his writings and evidences than he did by any of his movable goods. Remember that if they were had from you, you could never (7) get any more such as they be."

- (1) P.L. 369
- (2) P.L. 315
- (3) P.L. 464

- (4) P.L. 675
- (5) P.L. 375
- (6) P.L. 71
- (7) P.L. 560

(1) which a thread was passed. Then the ends of the thread were sealed, and
sufficiently marked to show whether the seal had been tampered with.

2. THE METHOD

(2) "The messenger was on horseback while I wrote you this note,"
wrote one, listing how many of these letters must have been sent off. Calling
some one trustworthy to carry a letter was often difficult, and caused
various delays. "I sent no letter to my father, even since I parted from
you, for I could not go far to London," wrote John (3) when travelling in the
train at one time of day. Probably many of the persons were nervous
on reflection of the danger of their correspondence, and were afraid to be
trustworthy, often sending as given in the letter. People going to the
continental fair and back home. You might at London have seen the
messengers enough to London. Letters often came to be answered at once
by the messenger.

3. THE RESULTS

(4) However, there was made to the recipients of letters to be
sent. But unfortunately for possibly the reasons had to a fairly the result
of disappointing each other. Hence this great collection of letters.
I might mention that my husband after his father's death: "Remember that you keep
always your writings. . . . You know, without need, in his time
reasoned and some by his writings and evidence that he was by way of his
movable goods. I should think it they were not from you, you could never
get any more such as they be."

- | | |
|-----|----------|
| (1) | P.L. 382 |
| (2) | P.L. 316 |
| (3) | P.L. 404 |
| (4) | P.L. 375 |
| (5) | P.L. 376 |
| (6) | P.L. 41 |
| (7) | P.L. 330 |

SUMMARY

The "Paston Letters", written by members of a Norfolk family to each other between 1424 and 1506, throw valuable light upon the domestic and social life of England in the fifteenth century.

In them can be traced the rapid rise of the Paston family from yeomen to earls. Three generations - William, John (1), and the latter's two sons, John (2) and John (3) - lived in the troublous times of the Wars of the Roses. Shrewd in increasing their land holdings by purchase, judicious marriage, and by wise choice of patrons, they defended their possessions against lawless aggression and unscrupulous litigation.

In such ambitious struggles their wives were their true partners - Agnes, wife of William; Margaret, wife of John (1); and Margarey, wife of John (3). Life in the fifteenth century manor-house gave unusual scope for women to expend all their powers in a wide range of activities, which this study has aimed to review.

Marriages of convenience were the rule, but in the Paston family fortunately resulted in unions marked by real affection and mutual devotion.

Once married the fifteenth century gentlewoman found herself faced with multifarious duties. She had to oversee a large house, to provide food and clothing for her family and many dependents, and to care competently for illness. Her children when young were trained at home, though later both boys and girls were often "boarded out" by a curious arrangement. She even kept her eye on the education of her sons at college or university.

As partner in her husband's management of the estate, she took his place in his frequent and prolonged absences. She bought and sold produce,

Summary

The "Piston Letters", written by members of a Norfolk family to each other between 1494 and 1508, throw valuable light upon the domestic and social life of England in the fifteenth century.

In them can be traced the rise of the Piston family from yeomen to gentry. Three generations - William, John (1), and the latter's two sons, John (2) and John (3) - lived in the transition times of the rise of the gentry. In the fifteenth century, by purchase, inheritance, and by the choice of patronage, they defined their position against feudal aggression and usurpation.

In such ambitious struggles their wives were their true partners. Agnes, wife of William, Margaret, wife of John (1), and Mary, wife of John (3). In the fifteenth century women gave unusual scope for women to expand all their powers in a wide range of activities, which this study has aimed to review.

Marriages of convenience were the rule, but in the Piston family fortunately remained in unions marked by real affection and mutual devotion.

Once married the fifteenth century gentlewoman found herself faced with multifarious duties. She had to oversee a large house, to provide food and clothing for her family and any dependents, and to care conscientiously for illness. Her children when young were trained at home, though later boys and girls were often "boarded out" by a curious arrangement. She even kept her eye on the education of her sons at college or university.

As partner in her husband's management of the estate, she took his place in his frequent and prolonged absences. She bought and sold property,

dealt with tenants, and even kept manor court. When envious claimants attacked the family property, it was often she who bore the brunt of their violence.

Yet in such a busy life she was not remiss in religious observance, either in the private family chapel or at the parish church, and when occasion arose she made devout pilgrimages.

She made time too for letters to her husband on affairs of the home and the estate.

Fortunate indeed it is that such a collection of intimate documents has been preserved to reflect so vividly in its mirror the daily life of a by-gone era.

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with servants, and even kept secret court. When any of the
attacked the family property, it was often the case that the
violence.

Yet in such a busy life she was not without religious observance,
either in the private family chapel or at the parish church, and when
no other more devout practices.

One more time too for letters to her husband on affairs of the
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Fortunately indeed it is that when a collection of intimate documents
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NOTE: References to Gairdner are by the number of the letter, given thus: "P. L. 336."

Other references are given by author and page.

All references to Traill are to Vol. 2.

Spelling is modernized in all authorities except Gairdner, who follows the original (see Appendix III). Quotations in this study are modernized unless specially quoted.

44

BIBLIOGRAPHY (continued)

NOTE: References to Gairdner are by the number of the letter, given

thereafter, e. g., "Gairdner, L. 100."

Other references are given by author and page.

All references to Trill are to Vol. 2.

Footnotes are numbered in all instances except Gairdner, who

follows the original (see Appendix III). Footnotes in this

study are numbered within specially created.

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APPENDIX IGENEALOGICAL TABLE

Clement Paston-Beatrice
d. 1419 : de Somerton

John Mauteby-Margaret
of Mauteby :
Fritton, etc:

Agnes Berry- William Paston
(co-heiress): of Paston, (j. of
: Common Pleas)
: d. 1444

Margaret-John Paston Edmund
Mauteby : of Paston, d. 1449?
(heiress): Gresham, etc
d. 1484 : d. 1466

William- Clement Elizabeth
Lady Anne d. before
Beaufort 1487

:
4 daus.

:
Sir John
d. 1479

:
Sir John -
d. 1503
Margery Brews
d. 1495(?)

:
Edmund

:
Walter
d. 1479

:
William

:
Anne -
W. Yelverton

:
Margery -
Ric. Calle

:
Christopher
d. young

:
Sir William - Bridget
d. 1554 : Heydon

:
Mary-Erasmus
Wyndham :

:
Clement (built Oxnead)
Admiral d. 1597

:
Sir William- Frances Clere of Stokesby
founder of N. Walsham Grammer School

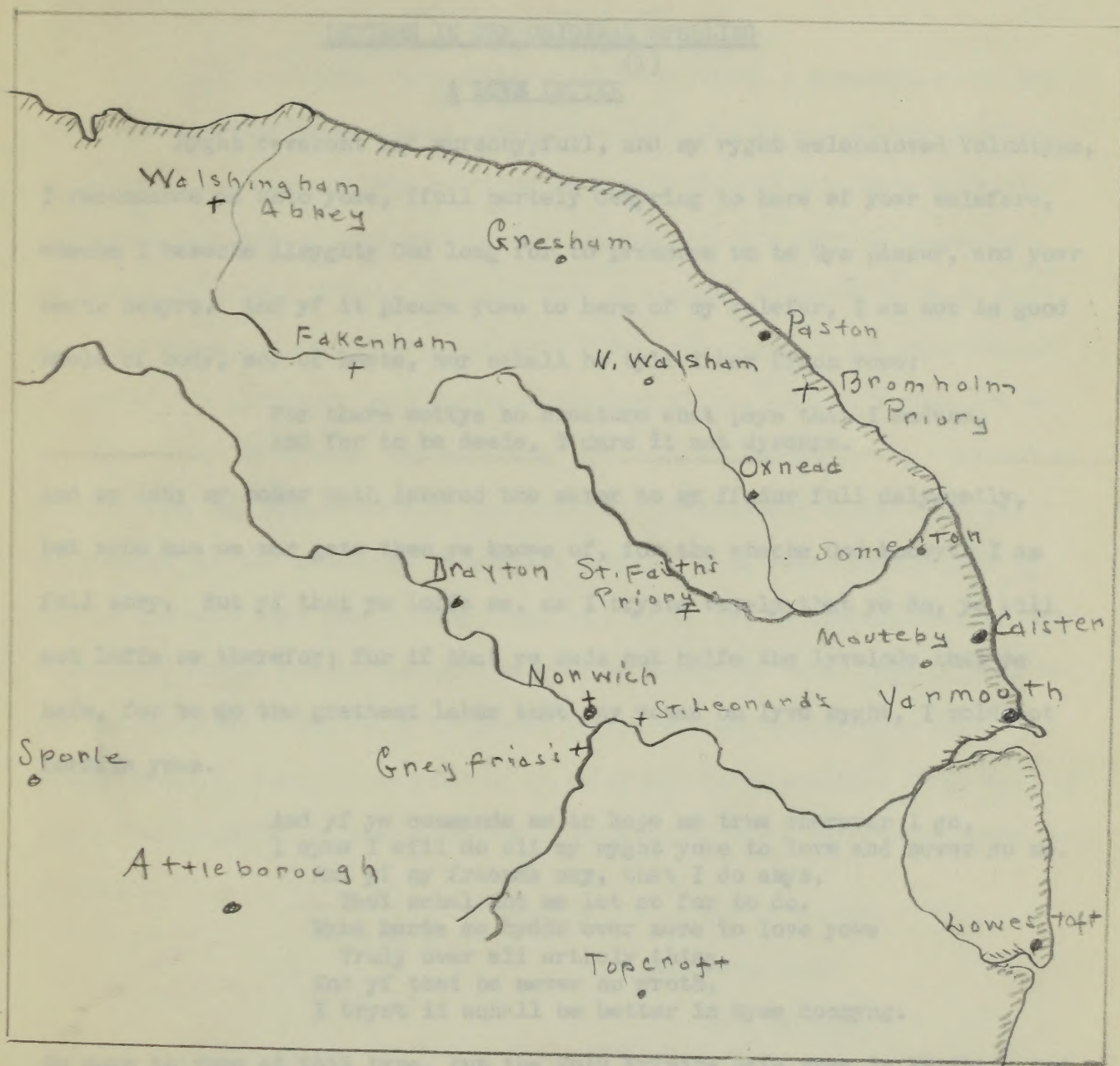
:
Christopher, Esq., 1554-1477

:
Sir Edmund, Kt., 1585-1632

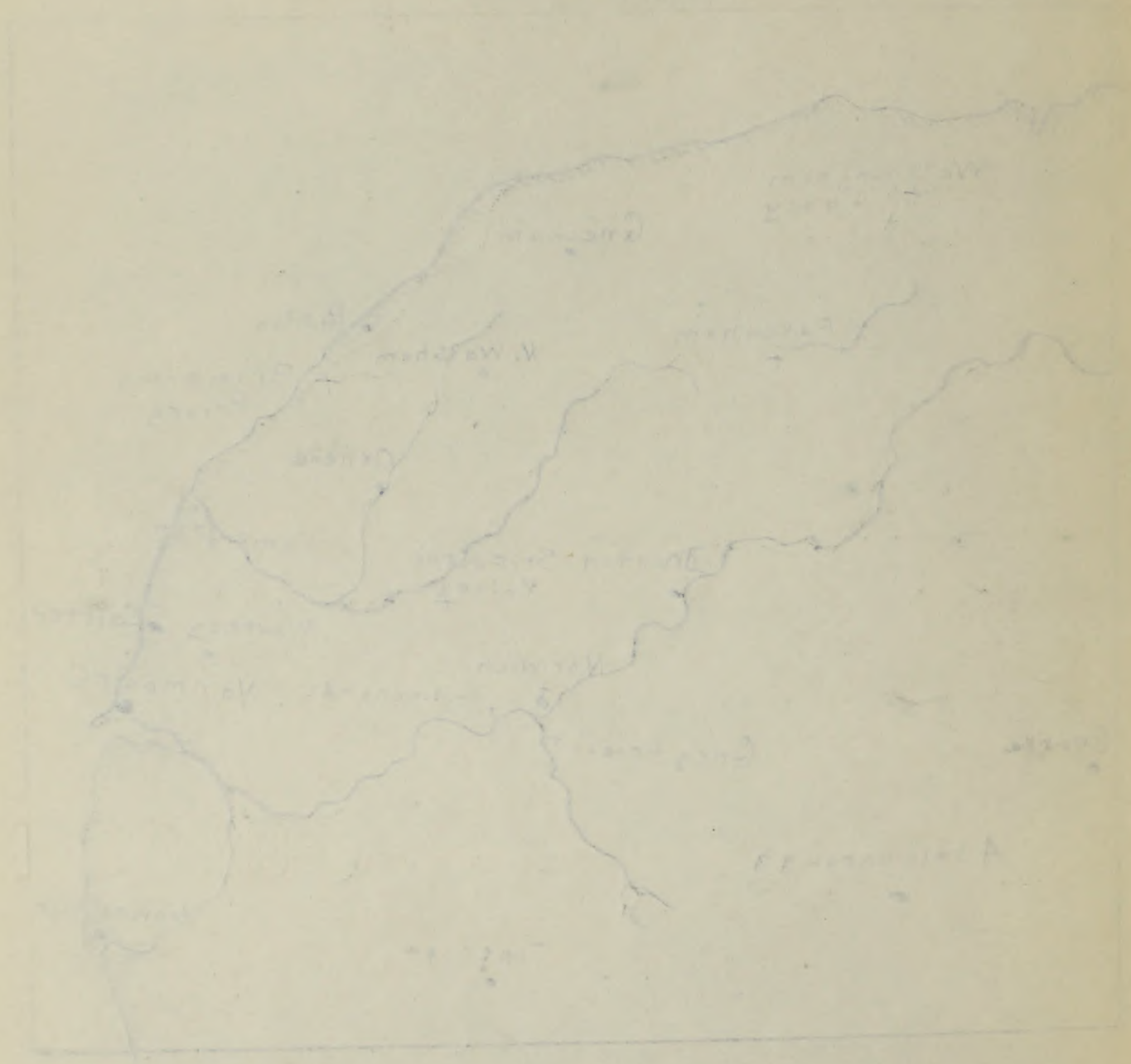
:
Sir William, Bart., died 1662

:
Robert, Earl of Yarmouth, 1631-1682

:
William, Earl of Yarmouth, died 1732, having survived
all his male issue; his title became extinct and he
left his estate to be sold to pay his debts.



Sketch Map of part of Norfolk, England
(after the Map in Greenwood, page 493)



Sketch of the Nile at Khartoum, Sudan
(after the Nile in the Sudan)

APPENDIX IIILETTERS IN THE ORIGINAL SPELLING

(1)

A LOVE LETTER

Ryght reverent and wurschypfull, and my ryght welebeloved Voluntyne,
I recommande me unto yowe, ffull hertely desyryng to here of your welefare,
wheche I beseche Almyghty God long for to preserve un to Hys plesur, and your
herts desyre. And yf it please yowe to here of my welefar, I am not in good
heelee of body, nor of herte, nor schall be tyll I her ffrom yowe:

For there wottys no creature what peyn that I endure,
And for to be deede, I dare it not dyscure.

And my lady my moder hath labored the mater to my ffadur full delygently,
but sche can no mor gete then ye knowe of, for the wheche God knowyth I am
full sory. But yf that ye loffe me, as I tryste verely that ye do, ye will
not leffe me therefor; for if that ye hade not halfe the lyvelode that ye
hafe, for to do the grettest labur that any woman on lyve myght, I wold not
forsake yowe.

And yf ye commande me to kepe me true wherever I go,
I wyse I will do all my myght yowe to love and never no mo.
And yf my freends say, that I do amys,
Thei schal not me let so for to do.
Myne herte me bydds ever more to love yowe
Truly over all erthely thing.
And yf thei be never so wroth,
I tryst it schall be better in tyme commyng.

No more to yowe at this tyme, but the Holy Trinite hafe yowe in kepyng. And
I besech you that this bill be not seyn of none erthely creatur save only
yours selffe, &c.

And thys letter was indyte at Topcroft, will full hevy herte, &c.

By your own,

Margery Brews.

(1)

THE OBEDIENT SON

Ryght worschful Syr, in the most lowly wyse, I comaund me to yowr good faderhod, besechyng yow of yowre blyssyng. Mut it plese yowr faderhod to remembre and concydre the peyn and hevynesse that it hath been to me syn yowr departyng owt of thys contre, here abydyng tyl the tyme it please yow to schewe me grace, and tyl the tyme that by reporte my demenyng be to yowr plesyng; besechyng yow to concydre that I may not, ner have noo mene to seke to yow as I ought to do, and savyng under thys forme, whych I besech yow be not take to no dysplesur, ner am not of power to do any thyng in thys contre for worschyp or profyht of yow, ner ease of yowr tenantys whych myght and scholde be to yowr pleasyng. Wherfor I besech yow of yowr faderly pyte to tendre the more thys symple wryghtyng, as I schal owt of dought her after doo that schal please yow to the uttermost of my power and labor; and if ther be any servyce that I may do if it please yow to comaund me, or if y maye understonde it, I wyl be as glad to do it as any thyng erthely, if it wer any thyng that myght be to yowr pleasyng. And no mor, but Allmyghty God have yow in kepyng.

Wretyn the v. day of Marche.

By your older sone,

John Paston.

(1) P.L. No. 323

THE UNIVERSITY

Right respected Sir, in the most joyful way, I congratulate me to your
good labors, beseeching you of your blessing. And it please your fatherhood
to receive and consider the paper and having me that it hath been so for you
your blessing out of this center, there always till the time it please you
to write to me, and till the time that by reports my blessing be to your
blessing; beseeching you to consider that I may not, nor have none to write
to you as I ought to do, and saying under this form, which I beseech you be
not able to do, but as not of power to do any thing in this center
for anything or profit of you, nor none of your blessing which ought and
should be to your blessing. Therefore I beseech you of your fatherly love to
bless the more this specific blessing, as I shall out of thought her after too
that shall please you to the utmost of my power and labor; and if that be
my service that I may do if it please you to command me, or if I may
understand it, I will be as glad to do it as any thing earthly, if it be any
thing that might be to your blessing. And so now, but Almightly God have you
in blessing.

Witness the v. day of March.

By your obedient son,

John Boston.

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